

THE PURE



AWARDS

THE PURE



AWARDS

## Judging Guide

We asked applicants to tell us about the ways in which they are taking experiential travel to bold new territories. Enriching lives, empowering communities, transforming conservation or simply telling a great story where it matters.

The Change-Maker Award is this year's stand-out category - spotlighting the people in our industry who are doing exceptionally great things to Change Worlds.

For reference, the below is what we asked applicants to tell us.

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We're looking for the full story – so in your answers please include...

- **A biographical statement.** We need to learn a bit about you (or your nominated PUREist) and your/their work over the years. What drives you? How do you make travel a force for good in the world?
- **Any relevant stats and timelines.** The Change-Maker is awarded to someone who shows consistent, refined progress in our industry. Therefore, any numbers or comparisons you provide are worth their weight in gold. These can arise from any point in your professional journey.
- **How you or your nominee has carved a legacy.** Ideally, it will be an example - either practically, ideologically or both - that future mavericks can follow. Or perhaps that legacy has been left on a community you cherish.





# Change Maker

THE MAVERICK OF THE YEAR

Let's honour individual greatness in the industry.

A PURE recognised Change Maker is someone  
who's consistently made waves amongst our mavericks.

People are already telling stories about them,  
but this is where we hear the full story.

# Applications Overview



## ALEXANDRA MICHAT

Since Alexandra has guided its hand, EXO Travel has earned B Corp status and swept industry awards for sustainable tourism. She was an early convert to greener journeys and has helped the business become a model for low-carbon excellence in Asia.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## AMANDA DECKER-PENTON

Amanda's leadership of Fogo Island Inn is bound to a duty of care, dignity and place, preserving the wildness of coastal Alberta with an astonishing property.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## ARMEN KAZAZIAN

Armen has given the Nile River the authentic luxury journeys it deserves, elevating both the stories of this ancient waterway and Egypt's global image.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## BEKS NDLOVU

In three decades, Beks has progressed from expert safari guide to the head of 18 luxury properties across Southern Africa. He and his team have created over 600 jobs and supported more than 1,000 kids through the African Bush Camps Foundation.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## CARLO MUIES

By tying conservation and humanitarian causes into every trip wherever possible, Carlos has managed several world-firsts - including taking tourists to a gorilla troop in the C.A.R, and co-creating an eVTOL expedition.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## DARIUS MORGAN JR

As VP of an exemplary Bolivian DMC, Darius has shaped the country's new image as a regenerative sanctuary. His vision has led to a significant growth in national high-value, low-impact tourism.

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## DAVID YANG

By referring friends and family across generations and continents, David plans adventures in partnership with 90% of the world's luxury hotels, as part of Curators of Travel.

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## ESIN GÜRAL ARGAT

Esin's focus on social policy, digital transformation and women-led responsible business runs through all of her work at Gürok & JOALI Resorts.

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## FELIPE ARTIÑANO

Felipe and his business partner have been obsessively helping rural Costa Ricans gain placements, scholarships and tourism employment. Felipe himself paddled a canoe down the Pacific Coast to raise funds for reaching more young people.

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## FILIPPO CURINGA

Connection - not consumption - drives Filippo's work in France and Italy, ensuring travellers leave with an open heart and mind.

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# Applications Overview



## FOUAD GIACOMO FILALI

Fouad revived a near-empty village in Morocco with La Fiermontina Ocean and its Poverty Stoplight programme. 10 hectares have been reforested, while 47 families have benefitted from the brand's commitment to beauty and self-determination.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## GARTH HOVELL

Garth guides families for the duration of their trip, side by side, finding time for vital regenerative work in Thailand, Kenya, Bali and the Andaman Islands.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## GEORDIE MACKAY-LEWIS

Geordie's military background drives his passion for better travel to some of the world's most remote areas. His role in the Pelorus Foundation has cut 1,000 tonnes of CO2, restored mangroves in Kenya, and lent a hand to whale research in the Antarctic.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## JANNE HONKANEN

Despite some of the biggest challenges a person can face, Janne has pioneered a new era of Nordic travel, harnessing his connection to wildlife and local artisans in Lapland.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## JOÃO CORREIA

João has steered his love of cycling into tours across Portugal and the rest of Europe, giving riders unforgettable experiences on two wheels.

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## JOSS KENT

With 29 lodges and camps, and tours spanning two dozen countries, Joss' mission for &Beyond represents the peak of luxury travel operation. Recently the brand has focused on large-scale rhino relocation and a net-zero goal for 2030.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## MANVENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT

As the leader of Dhun's enormous urban renovation project, Manvendra has turned a wasteland into a thriving forest. His other work with young talent and sustainable storytelling has impacted hundreds of thousands of people.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## MARILENA BARBERI

Bridging her love of travel and art history, Marilena walks people through the shapes and sensations of regional Italian culture.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## MARINA EFRAIMOGLOU

After rising through the world of high finance, Marina found a more spiritual path with Chinese medicine, eventually launching a retreat for natural, cellular-level health treatments.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## MARKOS CHAIDEMENOS

In his mid-20s, Markos transformed his family's two 30-room hotels until they earned global recognition. Today, he's expanding across Greece, has been named Young Hotelier of The Year, and has tripled his brand's room capacity.

[Click to find out more →](#)

# Applications Overview



## MEI ZHANG

Mei founded WildChina to expose the raw heart of her home country, offering destination training to local guides and re-discovering ancient trails for an international traveller cohort.

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## NIKOS KARAFLOS

Nikos' technical knowledge allows him to meld art, culture, gastronomy and engineering for more awe-inspiring experiences. His touch on Dexamenes Seaside Hotel has inspired a wave of similar abandoned building regenerations.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## PENNY RAFFERTY

Penny has been championing and re-defining Australian tourism since 2010. She co-founded Luxury Lodges of Australia to bring guests deeper into the continent's cultural heritage, furthering her influence with a seat on two advisory boards.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## RAJ SINGH

Raj has mapped river systems and brought the unique cultures of South Asian waterways to the surface with Antara Cruises. His nine vessels - built and staffed by riparian communities - take passengers through a distinct tale on every voyage.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## RUY CARLOS TONE

Ruy has been steadfastly preserving Brazilian Amazonian culture since 2004, supporting 2500 locals with new schools, infrastructure and teacher housing.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## SKYE GYNGELL

Tuscan dishes inspired Skye to offer food that's rooted in the seasons, nurturing life beyond the kitchen. She's mentored chefs and restaurateurs in an increasingly farm-to-fork hospitality scene.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## STRATIS BATAGIAS

As a child, Stratis kept returning to an abandoned sanatorium on a mountain, eventually restoring it under the MANNA brand to huge acclaim in Greece and beyond.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## TONE RØNNING VIKE

After exposing issues in rural Norway as a journalist, Tone threw herself into ecotourism. Years later, she promotes local farmers, traditional rowboats and organic gardening in her eight-room boutique hotel.

[Click to find out more →](#)



## ZORAN PEJOVIC

Zora led Maslina Resort to industry acclaim in 2021, and went on to develop other Croatian projects that put luxury in service of their surroundings.

[Click to find out more →](#)



# Disclaimer

Please bear in mind that the PURE community is a global community, meaning many Awards entries have been submitted by those for whom English is not their first language. With this in mind, we ask that you judge entries based on the work that they represent and not on the quality of the copy. Thank you.



# Alexandra Michat

## EXO TRAVEL

### WHO ARE YOU?

Alexandra is the Chief Purpose Officer at EXO Travel, she has professional expertise with social enterprise and non profit organization working towards local development. She first worked as Vietnam sustainability coordinator for EXO before rising up to her current position as EXO's lead in sustainability in 2018.

Alexandra leads EXO Travel's sustainability, JEDI (Justice, Equity, Equity, and Inclusion) policy & implementation and corporate social responsibility initiatives. She oversees the EXO Foundation, ensures the integration of sustainable travel principles across all business units, and drives innovation in responsible tourism.



### YOUR PURPOSE?

When she joined EXO the company had foundational responsible travel principles in place, but she played a pivotal role in expanding and formalizing these efforts, transforming them into core pillars of the company's mission and operations. Her leadership significantly strengthened EXO Travel's commitment to sustainability and DEI, making them integral to the company's identity. As a member of the senior leadership team, she is fully empowered to drive

EXO's purpose and ensure the company remains on a positive path. She works with the EXO Foundation and external partners to develop shared value projects while spearheading efforts for EXO's B-Corp certification. She recognized early on the importance of sustainability in the travel industry.

### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Under Alexandra's leadership: EXO Travel achieved Travelife Certification and more recently B Corp, solidifying its position as a sustainability leader in Asia. The company implemented a comprehensive carbon measurement system, significantly reducing its carbon footprint. Sustainable and community-based travel products were developed, providing economic benefits to local communities. EXO has been recognized in industry awards and forums for its leadership in sustainable tourism. Alexandra's work in sustainability has positioned EXO Travel as a model for responsible tourism in Asia. Her unwavering commitment to these values has transformed business practices, benefiting local communities, the environment, and the travel industry as a whole.



# Amanda Decker-Penton

## FOGO ISLAND INN

### WHO ARE YOU?

A nurse by training and community leader by calling, Amanda Decker-Penton's journey defies convention. After earning her degree from St. Francis Xavier University, she spent over a decade as a clinical coordinator in northern Alberta, delivering care in some of the country's most remote communities. In 2014, she returned to her hometown of Fogo Island, driven by a commitment to community revitalization. What began as a personal calling soon evolved into a leadership role in shaping one of the world's most acclaimed models of responsible and purpose-driven tourism. Amanda has been instrumental in the development and operations of Fogo Island Inn, now assuming the mantle of Innkeeper and Vice President Hospitality in 2025. Her path from healthcare to hospitality has been defined by a singular focus: to create a future rooted in care, dignity, and place - a philosophy that now guides the Inn's global reputation for meaningful travel.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Amanda believes that travel, at its best, is an act of care - for people, place, and culture. Her background in nursing taught her that healing begins with listening, empathy, and presence - principles she's brought to every aspect of her leadership at Fogo Island Inn. Amanda is driven by the power of hospitality to uplift communities and preserve ways of knowing what might otherwise be lost. With a steady hand and a deep sense of place, she has helped transform the guest experience into a platform for cultural exchange, economic resilience, and global understanding. Her leadership proves that thoughtful tourism can be a catalyst for lasting change.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Amanda's influence is woven into every detail of Fogo Island Inn - from its globally lauded guest experience to its role as a community cornerstone. Under her leadership, the Inn earned a MICHELIN Three Key distinction in 2024 and was featured in Condé Nast Traveller's 2025 Gold List. Yet her real impact lies in what can't be easily measured: building trust across generations, fostering a local workforce rooted in dignity, and stewarding cultural heritage through hospitality. Amanda has shown how one person can bridge global luxury with hyper-local values - changing not just Fogo Island, but the way we think about travel itself.

# Armen Kazazian

## KAZAZIAN CRUISES EGYPT

### WHO ARE YOU?

Armen Kazazian is the founder of Kazazian Cruises and a bold innovator in Egypt's luxury travel scene. With Armenian-Egyptian roots and a deep appreciation for the Nile's history, Armen began his journey by studying the river closely—its rhythm, its gaps, and its untold potential. Noticing the absence of a truly refined offering for discerning travelers, he launched Kazazian Cruises, transforming traditional river travel into a curated, story-driven luxury experience. From hand-designed interiors to immersive cultural programming, every detail reflects Armen's drive to elevate Egypt's global image. Today, he continues to disrupt expectations by expanding into Siwa with a wellness-forward hotel concept rooted in local wisdom. Armen's vision isn't just about luxury—it's about creating meaningful change through design, storytelling, and heartfelt hospitality.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Armen Kazazian is driven by a mission to elevate Egypt's story through transformative travel. Inspired by his heritage and a deep love for the Nile, he dared to challenge the status quo and introduced a new language of luxury—one rooted in purpose, cultural pride, and emotional connection. His strength lies in vision: the ability to see potential where others don't. Through Kazazian Cruises and now his expansion into Siwa, Armen empowers local communities, preserves heritage, and redefines what it means to travel with intention. His values—integrity, innovation, and impact—guide every step. Armen doesn't just build experiences. He builds legacy.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Armen Kazazian has redefined luxury travel on the Nile, transforming a once-overlooked segment into a world-class experience. His vision has attracted high-end global travelers to Egypt, increased the country's visibility as a luxury destination, and created sustainable job opportunities for local artisans, chefs, and guides. Kazazian Cruises has hosted over 3,000 ultra-luxury guests since launch, maintaining a 95% satisfaction rate and driving significant word-of-mouth and repeat visits. Now expanding into wellness tourism in Siwa, Armen continues to change worlds—elevating Egypt's global image while making meaningful, lasting impact on local communities.



# Beks Ndlovu

## AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS

### WHO ARE YOU?

Bekezela “Beks” Ndlovu is a visionary conservationist and tourism entrepreneur redefining the safari experience through community empowerment and wildlife conservation. He began his journey as a professional guide in 1995 and gained extensive experience with industry leaders like Wilderness Safaris. In 2001, he launched a private guiding company, followed by the founding of African Bush Camps (ABC) in 2006. Today, ABC operates 18 luxury safari Experiences across Botswana, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Beks also founded the African Bush Camps Foundation, supporting education and community development, and co-founded the Conservation & Wildlife Fund Trust to protect wildlife in partnership with local stakeholders.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

My purpose is to use travel as a catalyst for conservation and community upliftment. I'm driven by a deep love for the African wilderness and a belief that tourism, when done responsibly, can be a powerful tool for change. I'm inspired by the resilience of our communities and the untamed beauty of the landscapes we call home. I bring vision, persistence, and a collaborative spirit—skills that have helped build African Bush Camps into a platform for empowerment. For me, travel isn't just about experience; it's about protecting wildlife, preserving cultures, and creating opportunities that outlive us.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

I've changed worlds by building a tourism model that places people, planet, and purpose at its core. Through African Bush Camps, we've created over 600 jobs and redefined the safari experience to focus on conservation, community, and inclusivity. I believe the tourism industry must reflect the diversity of the world it invites to explore—and that everyone, regardless of background, should feel a sense of belonging in wild spaces. The African Bush Camps Foundation supports over 1,000 children through education, while our conservation and income-generation programs uplift entire communities. Through collaboration and care, we're empowering and transforming lives.

# Carlo Muies

## COOKSON ADVENTURES

### WHO ARE YOU?

Hey, I'm Carlo, a trained pilot and Ultra luxury expedition specialist. At Cookson I organize bespoke ultra luxury adventures trips, since starting at the company I've become somewhat of a specialist in remote and extremely the beaten path destinations such as mainland Yemen, Congo and C.A.R to name a few.

#### Key Events:

- Led the first tourist expeditions with Africa parks and Kamba to the western escapement in the Republic of Congo with scientists.
- Renovated two hotels in mainland Yemen for a client trip.
- Dehorned two rhinos in Kruger with my clients.
- Organized for my clients to be the first tourists to visit a gorilla troop in the C.A.R that is currently being habituated therefore becoming part of the habitations process.
- Created the worlds first eVTOL expedition in collaboration with Jetson.
- Visited over 140 countries

### YOUR PURPOSE?

I'm driven to create the most unique trips to the most interesting destinations on the planet while contributing to humanitarian and conservation causes along the way. I'm inspired by my clients varied interests from Sufism to Constantine and the elusive bongo working with my client to create a trip based on their speciality and dreams feeds my drive to constantly push boundaries.

I'm always on the lookout for conservation and humanitarian elements to weave into my trip, by highlighting these to my client they can contribute to specific causes such as animal conservation.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

- Organized solar panels and lights for a remote village in Yemen so the school children could study at night.
- Donated extensive funds to a community centre being built in Republic of Congo
- Discovered previously unknown species to Congo of amphibians in a remote bai.
- Dehorned two rhinos in Kruger with my clients.



# Darius Morgan Jr

## CRILLON TOURS

### WHO ARE YOU?

Darius Morgan Jr. is Vice President of Crillon Tours, Bolivia's pioneering DMC, and the creative force behind its modern identity. As the visionary behind the company's rebranding and experiential design, Darius has reshaped Crillon Tours' positioning into a benchmark of authentic, sustainable and simple luxury in South America. His leadership is rooted in a profound respect for Bolivia's cultural and ecological wealth, which he translates into every program, product, and strategic alliance. With a background in hospitality and a global outlook, Darius embodies the fusion of tradition and innovation. His role extends far beyond operations—he is the storyteller, negotiator, and brand architect, making him the face and driving spirit of Crillon's evolution in the international market.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Darius believes that true luxury is found in simplicity—in the silence of vast landscapes and in the quiet transformation that only remote, sacred places like Bolivia can offer. His purpose is to reveal the soul of a country too often overlooked, by designing experiences that are immersive, respectful, and deeply human. For Darius, branding is not just about logos and aesthetics—it's about meaning. It's about making people feel something lasting. His relentless drive to position Bolivia on the global map is rooted in love: love for his land, its people, and its infinite stories. Through purposeful travel, he invites each guest not just to explore Bolivia, but to experience the rare luxury of authenticity—and to return home changed.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Bolivia's emergence as a destination for conscious and luxury travel is the result of a clear, enduring vision—driven by the creative force of Darius Morgan Jr. Through his leadership, Bolivia's image evolved from a transit country to a sanctuary of regenerative experiences. In 2024, inbound tourism revenue grew by 7.57% compared to 2023, reaching US\$739.9 million. This increase, despite a slight dip in visitor numbers, reflects a shift toward high-value, low-impact travel—an approach Darius has long championed. His vision attracts conscious travelers seeking meaning over mass. When travel honors culture and place, it doesn't just elevate destinations—it transforms lives.

# David Yang

## CURATORS OF TRAVEL

### WHO ARE YOU?

I hold a law degree but chose luxury hospitality, driven by a passion for people and meaningful experiences. I began with brands like Four Seasons, St. Regis, and The Peninsula, working across Paris, Bora Bora, and being living between Mallorca and Taiwan. Fluent in Mandarin, English, French, and conversational Spanish, I connect easily across cultures. Over the past decade, I've curated private visits to the Louvre, superyacht journeys, and VIP sports access. I now lead a team focused on Chinese-speaking clients globally and beyond. I'm hands-on in caring for families, resolving crises discreetly, and continuously unveiling new destinations that inspire even the most seasoned guests.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

What drives me is the joy of creating moments that truly connect. I'm inspired by people—their stories, their warmth, and the trust they place in us. I believe travel should feel personal and thoughtful, not just impressive. I bring care, calm, and cultural understanding to every journey, and I find meaning in the little things—sharing a quiet moment with a guest's child, or helping someone feel safe in a foreign place. For me, travel is about kindness, curiosity, and reminding people of what's beautiful in the world and in each other.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

I've changed worlds one journey at a time—by turning expectations into wonder and challenges into trust. My clients return not just for the destinations, but for how they feel throughout: safe, seen, and understood. Many travel exclusively with our team now, referring friends and family across generations and continents. From rescuing guests in distress to introducing them to places they never imagined, the impact is lasting. It's not measured in numbers, but in the quiet loyalty and deep relationships built over years.

# Esin Gral Argat

JOALI

## WHO ARE YOU?

I'm Esin Gral Argat, VP of the Board at Grok Group, driven to create meaningful impact through every role I take. I prioritize sustainability, regional development & gender equality—values I champion thru my civil society work. I serve on the Boards of TKAD, GRVAK, & TRKONFED & advocate for inclusive & sustainable growth. Starting in the family business, I helped transform Grok into a more innovative, global group. A key milestone was founding JOALI Resorts, rooted in joy, transformation & environmental responsibility. I've served three terms on TSiAD's Board, led its Digital Transformation Roundtable & contributed to tourism, development & social policy commissions. I chaired the W20 delegation in 2022 for TKAD & resumed leading W20 Turkey in 2025. As Turkey's first elected female president of a Chamber of Commerce & Industry, I head the Ktahya Chamber & serve on TOBB's High Coordination Board. I also promote responsible business & women's empowerment at Fenerbahe Sports Club.

## YOUR PURPOSE?

I am driven by the belief that tourism, when guided by empathy, innovation, & sustainability, has the power to connect & uplift communities. I am inspired by the people I meet, the stories they share, & the cultures that shape our world. My strengths lie in strategic thinking, social responsibility, & building businesses that honor both people & the planet. I believe that every traveler should leave a place better than they found it—and so should every business. I deeply value a tourism approach that is environmentally friendly & inspiring to the human spirit, guided by the principle of "consume less, preserve more." Life is a balanced journey of the mind, body, & soul and at JOALI, we aim to offer an experience that nurtures this awareness.



## HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Through our work at Grok & JOALI Resorts, we've created sustainable travel experiences that respect local culture & prioritize environmental care. I've helped develop programs that reduce waste, preserve natural life, support local artisans, & provide meaningful employment for women & youth. In broader business & civic life, I've championed gender equality & innovation as tools to shift norms & open doors for others—particularly in industries slow to embrace change.



# Felipe Artiñano

## ORIGEN ESCAPES

### WHO ARE YOU?

A man of adventure, Felipe is a proud Costa Rican with an unrivalled knowledge and passion for his country, having explored nearly every corner of it. He seeks to have a positive effect on not only the environments and habitats that he knows and loves, but on the people around him, living his life to the fullest and being happy so as to positively affect others, and create a chain of making life better. Felipe founded Origen Escapes with Ofer Ketter in 2015 with big ideas, a pioneering attitude and a strong vision, but always with the aim of authentically sharing his love and knowledge of Costa Rica and to bring happiness to his guests through unique and innovative experiences. With a brain for operations and logistics, Felipe has been one half of a duo who are the original innovators of Costa Rica's ultra-luxury travel and adventure markets, and continues to create the extraordinary on a daily basis for anyone wishing to experience the magic of his beloved home.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

With the success of Origen Escapes, Felipe and Ofer wanted to create more and founded the Origen Foundation in 2021. The duo spotted an impending skills gap in Costa Rica's tourism industry and decided to fill it by providing opportunities for young, underprivileged Costa Ricans through the Origen Foundation. The government approved Learning Experience aims to train 18-25 year olds in employable skills, focussing on the tourism sector, to help them overcome the barriers they face in the job market, and to address the inequalities suffered by rural communities. For the foundation to be able to do this work, it needs money and that's where the 1% donations from Origen Escapes and De Sur a Norte: Costa Rica Coastal Quest comes in.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

The first generation of students of the Origen Learning Experience enjoyed a success rate of 70%, with the initial participants now successful leaders and business owners who bring a sustainably focussed approach to tourism. With many youths still to reach, Felipe hit on the idea of a challenge, never done before, to build a canoe and paddle it along Costa Rica's Pacific Coast, from bottom to top. De Sur a Norte raised \$44,000 and forged new mutually beneficial relationships, but most importantly it encouraged 100's of young people to apply for a six month scholarship. 50 secured places and will embark on a curriculum of life and employment skills before being placed into a tourism-related job, the first steps on a path to a success career.

# Filippo Curinga

## IDI TRAVEL ITALY & FRANCE

### WHO ARE YOU?

My journey into the travel world began with pure curiosity and a love for meaningful encounters. I didn't follow a traditional path, my first steps were organizing unique trips for friends, always focused on emotions rather than itineraries. What started as a passion became a profession rooted in human connection. I've built strong, personal relationships with hoteliers, guides, and local experts, and these bonds are at the heart of every experience I create. A key moment was understanding that true luxury isn't about five stars, it's about feeling seen, surprised, and inspired. Today, I continue to travel constantly, meeting partners and discovering hidden gems, always searching for ways to offer clients something authentic, beautiful, and unforgettable.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

My purpose is to make travel deeply human. I'm driven by connection, between people, cultures, and emotions. I believe luxury should be personal, not performative. What inspires me are real moments: a meal cooked with love, a story shared by a local, a guest feeling truly seen. I listen carefully, and that's my greatest skill, understanding what matters to each traveler, and designing experiences that leave a trace. Travel, to me, is a force for empathy, beauty, and positive impact. That's the change I work for, every single day.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

I believe true change happens when we shift perspectives when travel becomes a way to connect, not just to consume. My work has always aimed to redefine luxury: not as something to show, but something to feel. I've challenged the expected by creating experiences rooted in authenticity, emotion, and respect for people and place. The impact is in the way travelers return, with new eyes, open hearts, and a deeper understanding of the world. That, to me, is the power of travel and the change I'm committed to leading.

# Fouad Giacomo Filali

## LA FIERMONTINA OCEAN

### WHO ARE YOU?

Fouad Giacomo Filali is a global citizen shaped by diplomacy, finance, and humanism. Born in Paris to a Moroccan father — former Minister of Foreign Affairs — and an Italian mother, his journey spans continents and boardrooms, from New York to China. Yet, it is in the quiet hills of Larache, Morocco, that he found his truest calling. Co-owner of La Fiermontina Family Collection and Vice President of Fondation Orient-Occident, Fouad chose to leave behind corporate success to bring life back to Dchier, a nearly abandoned village. In 2020, he installed 6 km of water pipelines and began a journey of regenerative impact. His work interlaces luxury with solidarity—reviving culture, empowering communities, and reshaping rural futures through La Fiermontina Ocean, a model of socially transformative tourism. For Fouad, beauty is not only aesthetic—it's an engine for dignity, resilience, and connection.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

While walking the trails near Larache, he found Dchier—a village nearly erased by poverty, migration, and neglect. He believed true change was possible through dignity, education, and local empowerment. With his sister and Fondation Orient-Occident, we founded La Fiermontina Ocean: not only a sustainable eco-retreat, but a model for tourism that uplifts lives. The purpose is to restore meaning and pride through opportunity. In partnership with Fundación Paraguaya, they introduced the Poverty Stoplight to help families self-assess and grow. Through hospitality, culture, and care for nature, they create a virtuous cycle—where guests become allies in a shared journey toward resilience and renewal.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

La Fiermontina Ocean is a force for regeneration. They created a natural park, reforested 10 hectares with 7,500 olive and 2,000 fruit trees, and introduced organic farming and beach cleanups. Water now flows through 6 km of piping, homes are restored, and a new road links isolated villages. They renovated schools, trained teachers, and launched children's programs. 38 villagers—mostly women—have been trained in tourism, and 47 families now use the Poverty Stoplight to shape their futures. Guests connect with locals through traditional breakfasts and crafts. Each stay supports a deeper mission: to heal land and lives through community-led, beauty-driven transformation.



# Garth Hovell

## PRIVATE GUIDE WORLDWIDE

### WHO ARE YOU?

Born, raised & educated in Zimbabwe, my travel adventure began in the Eastern Highlands. My journey sees me manage safari camps in India, Russia, a private island in Panama & in Africa which has given me a unique insight into the world of UHNW individuals & their travel trends. In my mid 20's I was appointed as Sir Geoffrey Kent's private guide. In 2009, the concept of Private Guide Worldwide (PGW) became my reality, in which a single guide would travel with a family for all of their luxury adventure travel. PGW now has a stable of international guides. As the world becomes smaller, PGW continues to strive for a level of luxury in areas that are seldom visited. PGW is a highly personalised model with itineraries built around individual members of a family or indeed an individual and their wishes/personalities/interests. PGW can provide private access from incredible places of international renown to chef's private tables in remote areas.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

I am driven by people and our ability to change lives, be it the children of our guests who are the next leaders and conservationists of the next generation or the numerous projects that benefit the communities and environments in which we work. Constant and consistent innovation to find new and different ways to experiencing destinations that are seldom visited.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Breeding of bamboo sharks to replace & replenish decimated populations in areas of the Andaman Islands.

The re-planting of sea-grass flats in Trang, Thailand, to support the endangered dugongs, a sustainable alternative to deforestation for palm oil & rubber plantations.

Critical support for Balinese indigenous art forms, in particular dance, ensuring ancient techniques are not lost but are passed on to young practitioners at a community level. This is of vital importance to these communities as the ever-changing world threatens to replace traditional customs with modern-day alternatives.

The modernisation of a rural Kenyan school, access to wifi & predator-proof fencing to protect the children.

# Geordie Mackay-Lewis

## PELORUS

### WHO ARE YOU?

Geordie is an experiential group co-founder with a passion to transform people's perspective on the world and our impact on the planet. He began his career as a British Army Captain, before leading various businesses across Europe and moving into the Travel Industry. His love for wild places, paired with an unrivalled passion to change the way we travel inspired him and his co-founder Jimmy Carroll to start Pelorus. In the eight years since its launch, Pelorus has delivered meaningful experiences all over the world, launched a charitable foundation which has made a tangible impact to community-based projects globally, launched a climate investment fund (investing in projects actively removing carbon), been the first luxury travel brand to offer sustainable aviation fuel options and become B Corp certified.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Geordie is driven by a passion for creating life-enriching experiences rooted in meaning and purpose. His love for the wilderness and remote environments has shaped his personal journey and Pelorus' mission. It's about taking action, not just making noise. Whether leading conservation efforts through the Pelorus Foundation or working with partners, Geordie strives to create positive change. He understands that while no solution is a silver bullet, each step forward - no matter how incremental - is better than the last. A former British Army Captain and entrepreneur, Geordie combines resilience, leadership, and environmental commitment. He's helping lead the industry toward a more sustainable and impactful future.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Integrating conservation, carbon removal, and clean tech into client journeys, driving a new era of cleaner travel, inspiring clients to give back meaningfully. Through Pelorus Foundation, we supported 18 conservation and community projects towards our target of 30 by 2030. Notable projects:

- Enabled the removal of 1,076 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>
- Led an Antarctic yacht and scientific research expedition, resulting in 70+ whale biopsies, 3 whale geo-tags & the first regional whale heart monitor
- 116 Mongolian herder families supported with land management and soil conservation efforts
- 117 new hectares of mangrove restoration in Kenya
- Ensured a K9 ranger unit in South Africa had vital camera equipment in protection of rhinos

# Janne Honkanen

## OCTOLA PRIVATE WILDERNESS

### WHO ARE YOU?

Janne's journey began as a snowmobile racer, until an accident ended his career in 1999. Refusing to leave the life he loved, he founded a children's snowmobile school. Three years later, he was diagnosed with a brain tumour. He lost control of his life, faced bankruptcy, and at times lost hope. Four years later, the tumour stopped growing — and he started to see life in colour again.

In 2009, he founded Luxury Action, the first pioneer in ultra-exclusive travel in the Nordics. In 2016, he created Octola Private Wilderness, a carbon-negative retreat, and authored an award-winning Arctic cookbook. After that he reclaimed his snowmobile business, opened Reindeer Manor, expanded operations with a sister company in Stockholm — and will soon open the world's first Pure Air Research Centre. His life's mission is to craft meaningful experiences and quietly give back to the land that shaped him. Janne rebuilt his life by staying close to the land, people, and things that matter the most.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Janne believes travel should be an experience that touches your heart. After his illness and troubles, he promised himself he would help people, animals, and his community however he could. Raised in Lapland, and as a reindeer herder, nature has always been his guide. Through travel, he aims to build real connections between guests and the local people, nature, food, and traditions. He has seen how silence, pure food, and open landscapes can change a person. He wants every visitor to leave with a sense of belonging, as if Lapland became home for them.

Ultimately, Janne's purpose is simple: to care for the land that has raised him, to lead by example, and to let nature do what it does best — change us quietly but profoundly.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Impact begins with small, genuine acts — but his vision has always been to support the people and culture of the region. He sources reindeer meat, hides, and crafts directly from local herders and artisans, offering steady, meaningful income while upholding traditions. He employs Sámi artists, geophysicists, and herders, and supports youth sports and village initiatives to keep communities thriving. Every winter, he buys handcrafted wool socks from local makers as a simple gesture to show his care. In the past year alone, he has purchased 349 pairs as gifts for his guests, worth €13,960. Through his work, he brings vitality, employment, and pride back to the people of Lapland — and reminds his guests of the things that truly matter.



# João Correia

## INGAMBA

### WHO ARE YOU?

João Correia is the founder of inGamba, a luxury cycling tour company that combines his passion for cycling with a commitment to sustainable tourism. Originally from Portugal, João's love for cycling and the natural world led him to create inGamba in 2012, aiming to offer high-end, eco-conscious cycling experiences across Portugal, Europe and beyond.

His vision centers on creating authentic travel experiences while supporting local communities, offering an authentic and responsible way to explore the beauty of Portugal. Under his leadership, inGamba has become known for its exceptional tours, local expertise, and emphasis on sustainability. João's dedication to blending adventure with environmental and social responsibility continues to shape the company's success and inspire conscious travel worldwide.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

As inGamba has grown, so has João's commitment to sustainability, and Portuguese culture. Today, inGamba is a global leader in cycling tours, with a loyal customer base that spans the world. But João remains deeply committed to his roots—both as a cyclist and as a Portuguese entrepreneur.

João says, "The most rewarding part of this journey has been seeing people come to Portugal, experience the magic of our land, and leave with a deeper understanding of our culture.

It's about creating memories that last a lifetime, and showing people that travel can be sustainable, enriching, and respectful of the environment.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

João Correia and inGamba have revolutionized cycling tours by blending luxury with sustainability and highly curated experiences with a local staff. Through locally-driven tours, João has created a model of tourism that not only supports regional economies but also one that preserves cultural heritage and focuses on the gift of hiring highly specialized employees from Portugal. His commitment to responsible travel has set a new standard, proving that adventure and sustainability can go hand-in-hand with luxury. inGamba's success showcases the power of conscious tourism to create lasting positive change for both the planet and local communities.

# Joss Kent

## ANDBEYOND

### WHO ARE YOU?

Joss Kent is the Executive Chairman and CEO of &Beyond, a pioneering luxury adventure company that owns and operates 29 lodges and camps across Africa, Asia, and South America, with touring operations in 24 countries worldwide. Born and raised in Kenya, he began his career as a professional safari guide, leading expeditions for clients such as Bill Gates, Jimmy Carter, and Gene Hackman—and this on-the-ground perspective continues to shape his leadership today. Since joining &Beyond in 2012, he has driven the company's evolution into a globally respected model of impact-led tourism—scaling conservation and community initiatives across continents. Joss now leads &Beyond's bold 2030 vision: to double its investment in conservation and community development, achieve net zero carbon across its entire footprint, and conserve an additional 40 million acres of land through partnerships – scaling the company's positive impact, and continuing to prove that travel can be a force for good.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Joss's purpose has always been clear: to grow &Beyond's operations through its sustainable business model, securing landscapes of high conservation value and protecting species and wilderness areas for generations to come; while also scaling transformative development within the partner communities who are the custodians of these ecosystems. Currently, &Beyond protects over 1 million acres and supports 75 communities together with their NPO partner, Wild Impact. He has long believed that at the heart of everything &Beyond does lies an unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional guest experiences—the vital fuel that powers and funds its impact—ensuring that both &Beyond and its guests leave the world better than they found it.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Joss has led &Beyond's expansion across Africa, Asia, and South America, proving that impact-led travel can be financially sustainable. In 2013, he redefined what a luxury operator could do by translocating 87 rhinos to Botswana. It set a bold new standard. Under his leadership, &Beyond undertook with further translocations to Rwanda, DRC, and South Africa. In 2024, 17 rhinos were moved to Tanzania to establish a new breeding population in the Ngorongoro Crater. These far-reaching efforts continue to define Joss's tenure at &Beyond. In 2025, he will launch an impact scorecard, measuring not just &Beyond's investment in impact, but actual outcomes—from conservation and sustainability to education, employment, healthcare, and water access.

# Manvendra Singh Shekhawat

## SURYAGARH COLLECTION

### WHO ARE YOU?

A visionary hotelier and culture-shaper, Manvendra works towards reshaping the way the world sees India — and the way India sees itself. As the MD - Suryagarh Collection, a boutique hotel company, he is committed to crafting immersive hospitality experiences rooted in heritage, culture, and sustainability. He also founded The I Love Foundation, driving grassroots transformation across Rajasthan, India and leads Dhun, a 500-acre regenerative urban project near Jaipur. From building hotels that are cultural hotspots to future-forward habitats, his work spans tourism, conservation, and design. A speaker at global forums like the UN and COP16, and a fellow of INK, Aspen, and Earth One, Manvendra's work stands at the intersection of luxury, legacy, and livability. He has shown that tourism can be more than commerce — it can be conservation. That design can be more than aesthetics — it can be activism. And that luxury can be more than escape — it can be experiential & authentic.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Manvendra believes the spaces we create — homes, hotels, or habitats — shape not just the world around us, but the world within. His purpose is to regenerate places through storytelling, dynamic thinking, and soulful hospitality. As a hotelier, he preserves cultural memory through immersive design that celebrates regional identity. He restores arid landscapes into vibrant ecosystems, proving that sustainability is a practice of care and intention. As a community builder, he brings people together — helping them rediscover belonging and hope in the places they call home, while creating opportunity and empowering local lives through practices that build resilience and ecological harmony.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Manvendra has redefined Indian tourism and development through regenerative hospitality, ecological restoration, and community empowerment. Through Dhun, he has transformed barren land into a thriving habitat with 300,000+ trees, 180 bird species, and food forests, earning India's first real estate B-Corp certification. The I Love Foundation, has mobilised 10,000+ youth, delivered 60+ projects across 225 towns, and impacted 300,000+ lives. Through award-winning hotels and revived forts, he merges heritage with innovation—proving that business can heal, culture can drive progress, and communities can be the heart of change. Perhaps most powerfully, Manvendra's initiatives serve as proof that development can be both soulful and scalable.



# Marilena Barberi

## ITALY WITH CLASS

### WHO ARE YOU?

I have started this journey 35 years ago when I have realized that ancient art was my fuel. I became an art historian and tour guide myself and showcased Italy to thousands of people, my own way. We are travel educators who use our unrivaled access and connections to individually craft luxury journeys in all regions of the country. We also organize FAM trips, each of which takes a deep dive into the Italian culture of a specific location. We are highly esteemed for organizing cooking and food experiences of gastronomic excellence, and we formulate specialized itineraries for art and heritage tours.

We aim to architect travel explorations that highlight every natural, historical and cultural element of any Italian region that gives it its unique sentiments. All aspects of our travel blueprints are intensively experienced first-hand by us before being recommended to our clients.

Italy is a deeply evocative place to be in; we want to help it be your most transformative journey yet.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

It has been the echo of my heart to infuse everyone's life with Italy's artistry. Salvatore and I have devoted our past thirty years to this ambition, to honor the pride of our lineage and all the details of Italian culture that have woven ineffable beauty and enchantment into our lives ever since we were little children. We hand-tailor experiences throughout the land, from our bustling cities to the quieter villages, from the gem-like mountains to every idyllic seaside coast. We put incredible thought toward every detail, designing experiences that peak the human experience and develop the deepest resonance.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Guests come to reset; we give them rebirth" - Marina Efraimoglou  
Euphoria Retreat, is redefining wellness with the launch of its 360-degree Euphoria Methodos Advanced Medical Programs. This is the world's first scientifically proven cellular therapy for comprehensive health management using natural methods. The patented methodology has been tested on more than 10,000 users, offering a unique and trusted path to transforming health naturally while increasing longevity. This breakthrough approach to longevity works deep within on a cellular level. The result? Truly holistic and lasting health transformations. All of this unfolds within Euphoria Retreat's glorious nature-inspired setting – which is, and always will be, a white coat-free zone.

# Marina Efraimoglou

## EUPHORIA RETREAT

### WHO ARE YOU?

Ms. Efraimoglou had a successful career in the financial sector, founding her business Telesis in 1993. In 2000, she was awarded with the Kouros Award for Growth and Innovation, in recognition of her role as the only female major shareholder, acting as President and co-Managing director of Telesis bank. Socially responsible in life, Marina is also a life member of the board of Foundation of the Hellenic world. After a pivotal personal experience, Marina shifted her attention from the financial world into the worlds of holistic medicine and self-actualisation. Committed to leading a more spiritual life, she studied in depth with very well-known pioneers and travelled the world sourcing knowledge and experience in its most authentic form. After completing her studies in Chinese Medicine, Marina successfully created her own series of workshops and retreats, recently bringing them into the corporate world, with the aim of encouraging the emergence of a new type of leadership and cooperation.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Marina's enthusiasm and passion for the industry is demonstrated through her own dramatic life change. In 2001 she quit a high-profile job in Greek banking to learn about the world's best healing modalities. Euphoria represents Marina's personal transformation from esteemed banker to wellness visionary. Overcoming cancer twice in her late 20s, she sought to bring some much-needed balance back to her life - and into that of others. Being introduced to the world of Chinese medicine and the five elements was such an eye-opening experience for her that she decided to create a place where people with similar needs could be nurtured and guided on their own path to a more holistic and spiritually satisfying way of life.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

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# Markos Chaidemenos

## CANAVES EPITOME

### WHO ARE YOU?

As Managing Director of the Canaves Collection in Santorini, Markos Chaidemenos has transformed his family's small hotel business into a world-renowned luxury resort brand. After graduating from Swiss Hotel Management School, he took over at just 24, leading two 30-room properties: Canaves Oia Boutique Hotel and Canaves Oia Suites. Over the past 13 years, he expanded the brand to include new hotels & villas, and is now preparing to grow into destinations like Paros and Naxos. In 2023, he was named Hotelier of the Year at Virtuoso Travel Week in Las Vegas, a testament to his commitment to excellence. Markos has become a beacon for young Greek hoteliers aspiring to elevate their family legacies and redefine Greek hospitality on the global stage.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

What drives Markos Chaidemenos is a deep belief in the power of travel to connect, uplift, and inspire. Rooted in his family's legacy, he reimagines hospitality as a force for good — blending authenticity, innovation, and sustainability. He leads with empathy, creating spaces that honor local culture and elevate human connection. What inspires him most is his ability to dream boldly while staying true to his values. Markos shows that travel, at its best, is not just about luxury — it's about meaning.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Markos Chaidemenos has redefined luxury hospitality in Santorini, transforming his family's 30-room business into a globally acclaimed brand. Under his leadership, the Canaves Collection grew to five award-winning properties, contributing significantly to Santorini's reputation as a luxury destination abroad. His vision led to a 300% increase in room capacity and consistent recognition from prestigious global travel consortia. His impact extends beyond business—he's inspired a new wave of Greek hoteliers to dream bigger.



# Mei Zhang

## WILDCHINA

### WHO ARE YOU?

A Yunnan native and Harvard alumna, Mei Zhang founded WildChina in 2000 to create sustainable, immersive travel experiences rooted in the landscapes and cultures of her home country. While at McKinsey, she led a project for The Nature Conservancy in Yunnan that brought her back to her hometown with a new perspective. Viewing the region through the lens of economic development and cultural preservation, she saw that its richness rivaled the world's top destinations, yet remained largely unseen. That moment sparked the creation of WildChina. In 2025, the company launched GUDAO (ancient trails in Chinese) to an international audience—a series of journeys across China that invite travelers to walk forgotten paths and connect with the communities that have lived along them for generations.

Now a Ph.D. candidate at UC Berkeley studying the revitalization of the Tea Horse Trail, Mei continues to explore how travel can serve as a bridge between heritage, education, and regeneration.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

At the heart of Mei's work is a quiet conviction: travel, when done thoughtfully, has the power to connect—people to place, past to present, and strangers to shared understanding. From the highlands of Yunnan to the hutongs of Beijing, she has spent her career creating space for those connections to unfold—through storytelling, shared meals, quiet walks, and moments of mutual recognition. She believes in slowing down, in listening closely, and in honoring the communities, cultures, and landscapes that make each journey life-changing. GUDAO continues this work, inviting travelers to walk ancient paths not for distance, but for depth—to engage with the world gently, curiously, and with care.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Since April 2024, WildChina's GUDAO has hosted 31 groups across Yunnan, Guizhou, Zhejiang, and Beijing, welcoming 177 travelers and generating around USD 140,000 in income for local communities—including mountain guides, guesthouse owners, and artisans. In the town of Songyang, the heart of our GUDAO in Zhejiang, WildChina led a three-day destination training for 130 local travel professionals and curated cultural performances that reached over 12,000 visitors. In Yunnan, we are supporting the training of 13 aspiring mountain guides in partnership with Aluo, a long-time collaborator and the very guide who accompanied Mei on the trails over 25 years ago. These efforts reflect our commitment to local knowledge and long-term capacity building.

# Nikos Karaflos

## DEXAMENES SEASIDE HOTEL

### WHO ARE YOU?

Nikos Karaflos, owner and Imagineer\* of Dexamenes Seaside Hotel, has revolutionized the hospitality industry by blending art, gastronomy, culture, and engineering. With a background in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, and Multimedia, Karaflos applies innovative thinking to create meaningful hospitality experiences. His transformative vision led to the regeneration of a post-war winery in his homeland, turning it into an award-winning hotel that emphasizes local culture, wine, nature, and art. Through his interdisciplinary approach, combining his engineering expertise with a passion for creative implementation, he has reshaped hospitality into a dynamic, immersive experience. Karaflos's work not only impacts the hospitality sector but also fosters cultural and social regeneration, benefiting both his community and the global tourism landscape.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

What drives Nikos Karaflos is a passion for creating sustainable, meaningful experiences that connect people with culture, history, and nature. Inspired by his homeland's heritage and influenced by his travels around the world and the volunteering projects he has participated, he blends art, gastronomy, and innovation to transform hospitality into a force for good. His values—respect for history, the environment, and all earthlings—guide his work. By regenerating local communities and minimizing ecological impact, he shows how travel can be both profitable and socially responsible. Nikos's creative approach makes travel a powerful catalyst for positive change and cultural exchange.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Nikos Karaflos's work has had a profound impact, starting with the regeneration of the Dexamenes, a landmark that blends heritage with modern innovation. This has inspired other hoteliers to upcycle abandoned buildings, embracing sustainable practices like repurposing structures rather than demolishing them. His vision is also shaping the future of hospitality through projects like sustainable prefabricated cabins, designed to pop up at farms, wineries, and other sites. These cabins will connect guests to the land and the origin of their food, promoting sustainability while fostering deeper connections to local culture and agriculture.

# Penny Rafferty

## LUXURY LODGES OF AUSTRALIA

### WHO ARE YOU?

Penny Rafferty is the Executive Chair of Luxury Lodges of Australia, an organization dedicated to promoting luxury experiential travel with a strong emphasis on sustainability and community engagement. Since 2010, she has played a pivotal role in shaping Australia's luxury travel sector. In addition to her role with Luxury Lodges of Australia, Penny served as Premium Strategy Advisor then Sustainability Advisor for Tourism Australia for almost 6 years, setting the foundations for their approach. Penny's commitment to sustainability extends to her involvement with the Conscious Travel Foundation, where she contributes to initiatives aimed at promoting responsible travel and environmental conservation. She also serves on the Condé Nast Traveler Global Advisory Board, representing Australia's interests and advocating for sustainability in travel and is on Tourism Tasmania's Advisory Board. With Penny, sustainability isn't just professional, it's personal.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Penny Rafferty's inspiration stems from a profound belief in the transformative power of travel and a dedication to preserving Australia's natural and cultural heritage. Under her guidance, Luxury Lodges has integrated sustainability into its core. She advocates for tourism that fosters genuine connections with local communities and cultures, ensuring that guests gain meaningful insights into Australia's diverse heritage. Penny believes in travel's ability to change individuals, encouraging travelers to approach their journeys with curiosity and an open heart. As co-founder of Luxury Lodges of Australia, Penny transformed the perception of Australian luxury travel, highlighting the country's diverse landscapes and cultures.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Penny's not just promoting luxury travel—she's redefining it. Under her guidance, Luxury Lodges of Australia is more than a collection of beautiful places to stay; it's a platform for transformative, sustainable, and deeply human travel experiences. Her vision has inspired an entire industry to think bigger—beyond profits and prestige—to purpose and positive impact. She's championed the notion that luxury can (and should) coexist with environmental and cultural responsibility. She's helped shift the global conversation on what luxury in travel truly means. For those of us privileged to work with her, Penny is a force of clarity and encouragement. She brings us together, mentors us and leads with empathy and compassion.



# Raj Singh

## ANTARA CRUISES

### WHO ARE YOU?

With over 45 years of experience in wildlife conservation and destination development, Raj Singh has consistently redefined the way India's story is told. In 2003, he founded Antara Cruises to pioneer luxury river journeys across the subcontinent—opening access to regions once considered unreachable and reviving ancient waterways that were once vital lifelines of trade, culture, and civilisation. His journey began with a deep reverence for India's natural and cultural heritage and a vision to reimagine travel through slower, more meaningful exploration. Today, Antara operates nine bespoke, all-suite vessels, each designed for the rivers they sail—offering immersive voyages along the Ganges, Brahmaputra, and beyond. Raj has personally mapped over 30 river systems and launched the world's longest river cruise. His work is rooted in storytelling, regeneration, and raising the bar for authentic, sustainable, and place-based travel.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Raj is driven by a vision to restore the cultural, ecological, and economic significance of India's rivers—transforming them from neglected landscapes into celebrated corridors of heritage and connection. Inspired by untold stories, ancient traditions, and riverine rhythms, he sees travel as a powerful force for regeneration. His purpose is to create journeys that go beyond leisure—designed to foster deeper understanding, support local livelihoods, and reframe how the world experiences South Asia. Through design, storytelling, and stewardship, Raj ensures every voyage uplifts the communities and ecosystems it touches.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Through Antara Cruises, Raj has opened over 3000 km of navigable river routes, creating immersive access to more than 30 destinations' rich heritage & mythologies, & uplifting over 10000 communities — many unvisited by travellers in the modern era. His world class locally built ships source all materials and staff from riparian communities, directly supporting regional economies and reviving traditional skills. By drawing global attention to India's inland waterways, Raj has positioned South Asia river cruising as a world-class, sustainable alternative to conventional tourism. His work has created & curated a new way immerse in authentic India & and brought forgotten histories and communities back into the global travel narrative.

# Ruy Carlos Tone

## MIRANTE DO GAVIAO AMAZON LODGE

### WHO ARE YOU?

Engineer and ecotourism entrepreneur, Ruy has been working intensively to secure the wellbeing to river and indigenous communities in the Brazilian Amazon's Negro River, leaving an environmental socioeconomic legacy. Ruy Tone arrived in the Amazon to develop ecotourism and create his company Katerre Expeditions in 2004. He noticed there was a need to act for Environmental Preservation & Social Development in the municipality of Novo Airão (25.000 people, 38.000 Sq Km). Then he found out there was already a NGO running – the Almerinda Malaquias Foundation, providing environmental education for 1.000 children aged 6 to 17, with full infrastructure, high quality education, engaging them become active in the protection of the rainforest. Along with his ecotourism companies, Ruy turned one of the Foundation's main financial supporters (The tourism companies guarantees 70% of the annual budget necessary for the survival of this institution), then becoming the actual president and main advisor.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

His motto is "There is no Preservation without Education". He sees the importance of maintaining Education as the main pillar for social and environmental development, in order to keep the Forest standing for the future generations. Thru the Amazon Forest river communities schools, besides providing infrastructure – proper classrooms; bathrooms with septic tanks, kitchen annexes for meal preparation and teacher housing, – enhancing Education quality level was another major challenge: Ruy is now dedicated to the project "Riverside Education", rebuilding 25 river schools of Novo Airão. "My story in the Amazon has become a great social project. If we cannot change the World, let us make a difference in the one's life we are able to change."



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

The sum the ecotourism operation and the socio-environmental and educational projects impacts aprox. 2500 individuals and their respective families – equivalent of 15% of the municipality's population. As for Education, the Malaquias Foundation itself welcomes 200 students at its headquarters and the ongoing Riverside Education Project itself, already impacts the learning journey of 800 students in 23 schools, enrolled in the 10 schools that have already been renovated, and in those that are awaiting the start of construction. The construction and renovation of the units involves 40 workers from their communities. All projects continue to receive support and financial backing from Mirante do Gavião Amazon Lodge, along with other donors.

# Skye Gygell

## HECKFIELD PLACE AND SPRING

### WHO ARE YOU?

Skye Gygell is Chef Patron of Spring Restaurant and Culinary Director at Heckfield Place. Her journey began with a transformative meal in Tuscany at 19 where a single, perfect peach was served for dessert - inspiring her move from Sydney to pursue a culinary career and instilling a deep respect for seasonality and responsibly grown ingredients. She gained prominence at Petersham Nurseries, creating highly seasonal menus using locally grown, organic produce. This innovative approach led her to become the first Australian woman to earn a Michelin Star. In 2014, Skye partnered with biodynamic grower Jane Scotter before opening Spring, her first solo venture, and while Culinary Director at Heckfield Place. This farm-to-table collaboration allowed her to use the best British ingredients, grown regeneratively at both Spring and Heckfield. Beyond the kitchen, Skye is a celebrated writer, sharing words regularly for Vogue, The Independent and as the author of four acclaimed cookbooks.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Skye's vision is rooted in her belief that how we eat should be driven by the seasons – an idea she believes should extend beyond the kitchen, nurturing the sentiment that a life lived in harmony with nature can be even more beautiful and delicious than the conventional ways of the modern world. The changing seasons are her steadfast source of inspiration, and exemplifies how food helps foster a more meaningful connection to the places that we travel by creating a true sense of time and place on the plate. Her dedication to regenerative farming, locally sourced ingredients and simple, elegant cooking showcases how thoughtful cooking can make a meaningful impact on not only food and travel, but the world as a whole.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Skye's commitment to conscious cooking has had a poignant impact on the hospitality industry. Her work is testament that sustainable food + travel is not only possible, but more meaningful, nourishing + beautiful than we could have imagined. She has championed independent producers, led the way in reducing waste + eliminating single-use plastic in kitchens + was instrumental in shaping the regenerative ethos at Heckfield, a rarity among hotels. Her influence is evident in the admiration she has earned that spans industry + the growing number of hospitality hands championing sustainability + seasonality. Her mentorship has inspired Stevie Parle, Thomasina Miers, Lloyd Morse, + many others who embraced her vision in their own pursuits.



# Stratis Batagias

## MANNA

### WHO ARE YOU?

MANNA's second life began thanks to childhood curiosity: As a ten-year-old boy, Stratis Batagias, MANNA's current owner, used to go camping during his Summer holidays, in Magoulia in Arcadia, in the heart of Peloponnese.

"Before dusk, our footsteps led us to the abandoned sanatorium on the mountain. Even though it was in ruins, I always felt that there was positive energy surrounding the building. So, from then on, the idea entered my mind that at some point I wanted to revive this place"" says Stratis Batagias. Many decades later MANNA opens its doors and happily announces just a recent ""harvest"" of accolades: Second Best Hotel in the world at AHEAD Global 2024, First Prize CREATEURS DESIGN AWARDS 2025 for Best Hospitality Project Interior Design, First Prize ARCHELLO Hotel Building of the Year Award, First Prize MUSE AWARDS for Interior Lighting, First Prize Building of the Year and Historic Building Restoration Grail Awards 2025.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Inspired by nature, architecture and people's stories! The amazing story behind this unique building that was created in the 1920's by a Greek aristocrat lady named Anna Mela, who devoted her life and belongings to create a hospital for the wounded soldiers. Due to her philanthropy she was given the name 'Mana' meaning Mother in Greek, as the Mother of all of Greece's soldiers. The humanitarian element behind MANNA, the sense of giving, and my personal childhood memories in the derelict building is what touches me the most and inspired me to revive this project. Restore MANNA and offer it back to the world and the local community as a place to connect with nature, with Greece's mountains and the oneself.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

MANNA introduced Arcadia to the world and changed people's perception of Greece. Greece is not only about beautiful islands and beaches, it has epic mountains, forests, rivers and unique trekking opportunities in nature. MANNA introduces authentic Greece to the world, beyond the obvious.. I think we also helped in changing the Greek hotelier's perception of tourism development in Greece. Pointing out the endless beauties of our mountains, cobble stone villages, traditions and forests. For us it is essential that we opened a new path for tourism development. The significance of re-using and restoring existing buildings. It is crucial for sustainability purposes, reviving local rural communities and protecting our heritage.

# Tone Rønning Vike

29 | 2 AURLAND

## WHO ARE YOU?

I am a previous journalist, having worked for national Norwegian Newspapers. After having completed a documentary on the bad state of the Norwegians fjords, and a series on how to make people move back to the Norwegian countryside, as centralization is braindraining rural Norway, I persuaded my husband, a master builder, to leave city life behind us, and settle down on an abandoned farm he had inherited in Aurland in the UNESCOlisted Naeroyfjord Park - and start an ecotourism hotel. We have restored two 18th century buildings, one 19th century buildings, used reclaimed materials and windows, and we have now have a huge organic kitchen garden, planned on the principles of regenerative farming and improvement of the soil to sequester carbon (Kiss the Ground), a restaurant and eight rooms (downsized from 12). We have ten employees, have daily SLOWADVENTURE guided tours in the UNESCO park and fjordlandscape, and are one of Norway's 22 certified ecotourism companies, a thorough process.

## YOUR PURPOSE?

I wanted to create "The green heart" of Norway, show that ecotourism is the way to go in the fourth biggest tourist destination in Norway, where 250 000 cruise passengers visit every year. During the pandemic I became a spokesperson for sustainable small scale tourist companies, as we risked to loose everything we had dreamt of and worked so hard for (17 hrs a day was often the normal). We present our guests to local farmers who farm the steep mountains surrounding Aurland. We inform about how climate changes affect our area (glaciers melting, fish stock declining, waterfalls drained), and create meaningful dialogues with our guests. Promoting our local community and including our guests - is a part of being "the green heart" of Norway.



## HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

With ten employees I have accomplished to attract people to the Norwegian countryside. Other tourist companies in the area seem to be copying our focus on local produce and the importance of protecting the UNESCO site. I have been on the board of the UNESCO site, and quite tired of always being the "idealistic woman". We promote local farmers and traditional handcrafters and old traditional rowboats, a contrast to the many RIB boats and diesel ferries trafficking the fjord. With the new kitchen garden we are self sustained with organic vegetables, and I dare to say: we are ripples in the water, promoting pride, understanding and protection of the people and nature in the World heritage park.

# Zoran Pejovic

## BOUTIQUE HOTEL ALHAMBRA & THE HISTORIC VILLAS

### WHO ARE YOU?

Zoran Pejović is a luxury hospitality executive with over 20 years of international experience in hospitality development and operations. Currently Chief Growth & Strategy Officer at Lošinj Hotels & Villas, he drives the strategic transformation of its island resorts, positioning them as industry leaders.

His career highlights include leading the development and opening of Maslina Resort on Hvar – a Relais & Châteaux property which earned a spot on the Condé Nast Traveller 2021 Hot List and Travel + Leisure 2021 It List. Zoran also founded the Wine & Cheese Bar Paradox in Split, named the world's best wine bar in 2019. He played key roles in projects like Villa Nai 3.3 and worked with iconic brands including Aman Resorts and Silversea. Renowned for his innovative vision and commitment to responsible hospitality, Zoran's leadership continues to shape the future of luxury travel.

### YOUR PURPOSE?

Zoran Pejović is a visionary hospitality expert driven by the belief that travel can be a force for good, focused on building brands for values, rather than business for valuation. Drawing inspiration from his Mediterranean roots and global experiences, he champions context-dependent, responsible hospitality projects deeply rooted in the local environment, community, and cultural identity. He advocates creating intrinsically valuable, sustainable hospitality concepts that merit preservation for future generations. By fostering symbiotic relationships between luxury resorts and their surroundings, Zoran uses hospitality to uplift communities, protect heritage, and inspire positive change in the world of travel.



### HOW HAVE YOU CHANGED WORLDS?

Zoran Pejović has impacted luxury hospitality by driving revenue growth, earning accolades, achieving sustainability milestones, and engaging communities. Under his guidance, Maslina Resort earned a place on Condé Nast Traveler's Hot List and Travel + Leisure's It List in 2021. He spearheaded a transformation at Lošinj Hotels & Villas, exemplified by Hotel Bellevue becoming Croatia's first Preferred Hotels & Resorts member. Pejović co-founded Wine & Cheese Bar Paradox, named the world's best wine bar in 2019, and helped develop Villa Nai 3.3 – an eco-conscious retreat now a member of The Leading Hotels of the World – reflecting the lasting influence of his strategic and responsible approach.



THANK  
YOU