

Africa's top tourism innovators crowned

High-end African travel marketplace, We Are Africa announced the winners of their 2017 Innovation Awards on 2 May. The awards celebrated the most inventive, inspiring and unexpected achievements from across the categories of conservation, community engagement, design, experiential travel, individual and brand market influence, as well as the exceptional young professionals trailblazing the industry.



Speaking on the 2017 entries, Event Director Ryan Wallace commented that; “This year’s shortlist really captured the diverse and groundbreaking accomplishments from all corners of the continent. What was most exciting to see from the entries was how each one provided a snapshot into what is set to be a very cutting-edge future for the African travel and hospitality industry. Well done to all the winners”.

The winners for We Are Africa’s 2017 Innovation Awards:

Rise Africa:

This award recognises an up and coming young star making a mark in the African travel industry: From influential bloggers to passionate tour guides and top chefs to remarkable hotel personnel, these individuals are the next generation of trailblazers.

Winner: Yvonne Bahlangene (African Bush Camps) - Bahlangene has been appointed to the African Bush Camp’s Foundation board in recognition of her outstanding contribution to community empowerment and sustainable tourism.

Conserve Africa:

This category acknowledges those demonstrating outstanding leadership in the complex area of conservation, embarking on bold initiatives to protect Africa’s natural resources.

Winner: Tswalu Kalahari Reserve - the award acknowledges work done in their Ground Pangolin project, which reveals new details of this endangered species’ lifestyle and biology, and illustrates how important protected areas are to their survival.

Design Africa:

Whether it's a showstopping art installation, interiors overhaul or pace-setting new build, this category celebrates the designs changing the look of modern Africa.

Winner: The Royal Portfolio (The Silo Hotel) - each of the 82 pillowed glass windows in the hotel contains 56 individual panels of inch-thick, insulated glass. The windows are roughly 5.5 metres (18ft) tall and they bulge out about a metre forming a remarkable lens through which to view Cape Town's extraordinary natural beauty.

Support Africa:

This category acknowledges those championing a progressive view of the continent from outside its borders: these brands have a deep passion for the continent and their influence brings travellers to share in Africa's unexplored mysteries.

Winner: Jacada Travel - awarded for their project titled 'Masking Up For Gorillas', Jacada Travel is using their platform as a tour operator to make a substantial positive impact on conservation efforts in Uganda and Rwanda.

Engage Africa:

This award recognises those collaborating with the local population to support, train and transform the community in the endeavour to build a more united Africa.

Joint Winners: Time + Tide - Time + Tide have seen parents empowered to help their children develop. As a result, children who couldn't crawl, walk or communicate are now starting to acquire those skills.

Uthando (Love) South Africa - shining a bright light on a myriad of remarkable change-makers and innovative community development projects. Their goal is community and environmental development whilst propagating a spirit of Ubuntu).

Experience Africa:

This award celebrates imaginative itineraries that surprise, amaze and challenge traditional expectations of African travel – these brands work hard to really show how their country stands out.

Winner: Ultimate Safaris Namibia - a single safari raises R250,000 for conservation, whilst educating and encouraging participants to become part of the solution.

Shape Africa:

This award recognises an individual whose tireless passion and dedication to changing perceptions of the continent are shaping Africa's future, for the better.

Winner: Beks Ndlovu (African Bush Camps) - Ndlovu qualified as a professional guide in 1999 and spent some time

learning the industry before his roots called him home to Hwange National Park. Since then he has built a unique brand across three countries and using a plethora of skills he successfully communicates the beauty of Africa across cultures and nationalities.

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