

How do we travel while minimizing our negative impact on the world? It's a question T+L readers are asking with growing frequency. We, as editors, recognize our responsibility to help you put your money where your values lie by spotlighting the people, places, and companies making positive change. In the following pages, we honor those at the vanguard of creating a healthier, more sustainable planet.

BY JEFF CHU EDITED BY SARAH BRUNING + HANNAH WALHOUT

TRAVEL + LEISURE

GLOBAL *Vision Awards*

Nkhotakota Wildlife Reserve in Malawi is managed by African Parks, one of the honorees in our 2020 Global Vision Awards.

TO OUR READERS:

Ten, maybe even five years ago, I thought nothing of cracking open a plastic water bottle in my hotel room before bed and drinking half, only to open another bottle in the morning. My intention was never to be wasteful: I'd forget that I had touched the first bottle. And so, I felt a momentary pang of guilt at seeing two plastic bottles before me, chugged them both, and moved on.

Now I'm conscious of the fact that more than 300 million tons of plastic waste is produced globally every year. I drink tap water wherever possible and reach for refillable bottles, which are becoming the norm in more hotels. In recent years, many travel companies, such as Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas and Norwegian Cruise Line, have stopped offering plastic water bottles on their properties and ships. Other single-use plastics are on their way out, too; more and more companies are making that pledge.

Why? Their customers expect it. A recent survey from Booking.com notes that 55 percent of travelers are more determined to make sustainable travel choices than they were even a year ago.

Some people I talk with give a roll of the eye and counter that eliminating single-use plastics is a corporate stunt. I acknowledge that sentiment, but I also believe that everyone has to start somewhere, and if getting rid of plastic straws and bottles is one small step on the path to a healthier planet,



I'm glad we're taking it.

We've reached a moment where supporting companies trying to effect change has taken on new urgency. Many of you have stressed this to me in comments and letters. Through the Global Vision Awards, we're honoring travel brands, nonprofits, countries, government leaders, and more who are working hard to minimize their footprints while maximizing their positive impact. Each of this year's 25 honorees has been nominated by a group of industry experts (*see right*) and vetted by our editorial team. You'll find 13 of them in the following pages. We want to recognize those who are facing the challenges of today's world head-on, with ingenuity and hope.

The travel and tourism industry continues to grow, generating more than a tenth of total economic activity worldwide. It's directly responsible for almost 320 million jobs. While I realize that as more of us travel, and the potential for overtourism, waste, and environmental damage grows, there is also strength in numbers. If we all start asking the right questions and changing our behavior while we travel, the world could look very different in certainly 10, maybe even as little as five years from now.

— JACQUELINE GIFFORD

MORE HONOREES **Airports Authority of India** (*aaa.aero*), **Charles Carlow** (*wildbushluxury.com*), **Climate Neutral** (*climateneutral.org*), **Desa Potato Head** (*potatohead.co*), **Eviation** (*eviation.co*), **Greta Thunberg** (*@gretathunberg*), **Homage Hospitality** (*stayhomage.com*), **Inkaterra** (*inkaterra.com*), **Intrepid Travel x Offset Earth** (*offset.earth/intrepidforest*), **MesoAmerican Reef Tourism Initiative** (*mesoamericanreef.org*), **Para La Naturaleza** (*paralanaturaleza.org*), and **Patagonia** (*patagonia.com*).

Read about all 25 winners at travelandleisure.com/globalvision.

THE PANEL

DEBORAH BERKE
architect and designer of
21C Museum Hotels

DEBORAH CALMEYER
CEO of Roar Africa

SUSIE ELLIS
chairman and CEO of the
Global Wellness Institute

ZIM FLORES
writer, entrepreneur, and
founder of Travel Noire

NEIL JACOBS
CEO of Six Senses
Hotels Resorts Spas

KARISSA KRUSE
president of Sonoma
County Winegrowers

SVEN-OLOF LINDBLAD
CEO of Lindblad Expeditions

GREGORY MILLER
executive director
of the Center for
Responsible Travel

NATE MOOK
executive director of
World Central Kitchen

NICHOLE POWELL
founder and CEO
of Kinfield

JEN RUBIO
cofounder of Away

ERINCH SAHAN
chief executive of the World
Fair Trade Organization

JIM SANO
vice president of travel,
tourism, and conservation
at the World Wildlife Fund

FRED SWANIKER
cofounder of the African
Leadership Academy and
African Leadership Network

KEVIN WEST
Travel + Leisure
editor at large

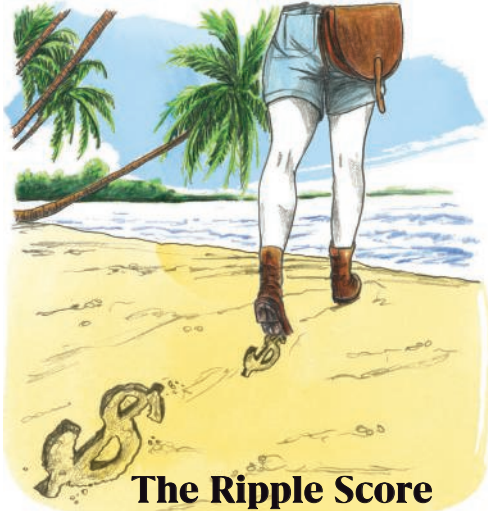
GISELA WILLIAMS
Travel + Leisure
special correspondent

COSTA RICA

In 1994, this small Central American nation amended its constitution to include a revolutionary guarantee for its citizens: the right to a healthy environment. In the years since, Costa Rica has become an environmental trailblazer. Though it will likely fall short of its most ambitious goal—to be the world's first carbon-neutral nation by next year—it has nonetheless made great strides. Roughly 98 percent of the country's electricity now comes from renewable sources, and more than a quarter of its land is protected from development. The tourism board's Certification for Sustainable Tourism, introduced in 1995, has become a model for other nations—encouraging businesses to adopt practices that minimize the negative environmental effects of the travel industry. Today, fully half of the 3.1 million annual visitors to Costa Rica now engage in some sort of ecotourism, boosting the economy and helping protect places like the La Fortuna waterfall (*pictured*) for generations to come.

WILLIAM HEREFORD

GLOBAL VISION AWARDS



The Ripple Score

Done right, tourism “creates financial opportunities for women, youth, and indigenous communities, and empowers local people to protect their environment for future generations,” Canadian entrepreneur Bruce Poon Tip says. This vision is at the heart of G Adventures, the tour operator Poon Tip founded in 1990, which strives to maximize the positive economic impact of travel on communities around the world. Today, some 200,000 travelers take a G Adventures trip

Daniela Fernandez

As a child in Ecuador in the 1990s, Daniela Fernandez frolicked in the clean, cold waters of the Pacific. Years later, when she attended a UN environment meeting as a Georgetown freshman, she realized that the oceans were in jeopardy. She heard about collapsing marine ecosystems, withering reefs, acidifying oceans, and warming waters. She



also noticed that she was by far the youngest person in the room. Within months (at just 19 years old) she founded the Sustainable Ocean Alliance, a nonprofit dedicated to educating her peers about the

each year; the company organizes itineraries to every continent except Antarctica. Last year, it introduced the Ripple Score, a metric that tells travelers exactly how (and how much of) the money spent on a G Adventures package benefits the people and places they visit. In the cacao-growing Ecuadorian village of Shandia, for instance, local youths lead visitors on cycling tours. On Malaysia’s Libaran Island, residents have received training in traditional craft and cookery, skills that enable them to benefit from the steady, lucrative market of visitors drawn by the island’s nesting sea turtles. (The trips that feature these excursions earn a 98 and a perfect 100, respectively.) The Ripple Score lets travelers see how their presence in these places affects the people they meet—and thanks to a new program, Project 100, 2020 will see 100 new tourism-related community initiatives that tour groups can support on the ground. Poon Tip says, “tourism can be a force for good—if we approach it in a responsible and inclusive way.” gadventures.com.

world’s waters—and empowering them to help. The SOA global network brings leaders under 35 together to devise economically viable initiatives that protect and improve the health of the oceans. Through its accelerator program, it has boosted nearly two dozen marine-technology-focused start-ups with seed funding and mentoring. Among them: Loliware, which makes disposable straws and cups from seaweed-based bioplastic. soalliance.org.

Bucuti & Tara Beach Resort

Beachfront cocktails at sunset and couples massages in ocean-view cabanas are par for the course at luxury Caribbean hotels. What sets this Aruba property apart is its status as the region’s first certified carbon-neutral resort—a distinction that stems from Austrian founder-owner Ewald Biemans’s relentless efforts to restore and preserve the paradise he encountered 50 years ago. Environmental consciousness informed Bucuti & Tara’s design, from the fitness-center floor surfaced with recycled tires and laundry bags made from upcycled linens to the solar panels that provide about 15 percent of the resort’s electricity. Gardens are irrigated by treated gray water from sinks, showers, and laundry. And the gym takes the idea of empowerment to a new level: as guests work out, exercise equipment also generates electricity for the resort. bucuti.com; doubles from \$403.



AFRICAN PARKS

The story of Zakouma National Park in Chad is one of remarkable resurrection. Between 1998 and 2010, more than a dozen rangers were killed by armed poachers, who also slaughtered 95 percent of the park’s elephants. The nonprofit took over the park’s management in 2010, and, as of 2018, the elephant population

had risen to 560—of which 127 were calves. At the same time, the first black rhinos to roam the park in more than four decades were reintroduced. African Parks, which manages 16 reserves in 10 countries, owes much of its success to a top-down approach of taking on full park oversight, rather than simply handling the conservation work within state-run parks. It deploys a holistic ecosystem-management philosophy that combines high-tech tools, including tracking devices and surveillance drones, with a zero-tolerance anti-corruption policy to help combat poaching. Education, job creation, and cooperation with local

communities are also essential elements of the sustainable model. One key initiative: developing schools and leadership programs that teach the skills needed to advance conservation efforts. Of the organization’s 5,214 employees, roughly 90 percent now come from the local communities. African Parks’ work has procured high-profile support—Prince Harry is now its president—and prompted new requests for help. In November, Zimbabwe’s government enlisted the group to restore Matusadona National Park, where mismanagement and poaching have decimated the rhinos, lions, and elephants. africanparks.org.

▲ One of African Parks’ most recent rehabilitation efforts involved releasing rhinos into Malawi’s Liwonde National Park.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAVID SPARSHOTT; PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATION BY SAM KERR

KYLE DE NOBREGA



Kind Traveler

Jessica Blotter and Sean Krejci, the founders of Kind Traveler, have created a travel-booking platform that offers a clever, easy-to-use system for both seeing the world and investing in making that world better.

Make a donation to one of their vetted charities, and you unlock special rates for their hundreds of partner hotels. For example, if you're planning a trip to the Maldives and animal welfare is a cause close to your heart, a contribution of as little as \$10 to the Manta Trust—which researches and protects threatened manta rays in the region—will discount your booking at Hurawalhi Island Resort by an average of \$275 per night. One hundred percent of donations go to the chosen cause. Turns out that it's better to give *and* to receive. kindtraveler.com.

JetBlue

Air travel accounts for 2.4 percent of carbon dioxide emissions today, and greenhouse-gas emissions from aircraft could triple by 2050 as more passengers take to the skies. Many carriers have acknowledged their adverse environmental impact in recent years, but none has gone so far as JetBlue in mitigating its carbon footprint. Since 2008, the airline has offset more than 1 million

metric tons of CO₂—about the amount produced by 217,000 cars annually. In an unprecedented move, the airline says it will offset all of its domestic flights beginning in July, and flights out of San Francisco will soon use a biofuel-kerosene blend that could cut emissions by 80 percent. But JetBlue's focus extends beyond commercial air travel. After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, it sent hundreds of relief flights to the island carrying



emergency supplies and volunteers. The airline also partnered with World Central Kitchen to deliver drinking water, food, and other supplies to the island and, after last year's Hurricane Dorian, to the Bahamas. jetblue.com.



President Tommy Remengesau

Under Remengesau's visionary leadership, Palau, a nation of 340 islands in the western Pacific, has become a standard-setter in marine conservation. His administration has banned single-use plastics; outlawed reef-damaging compounds in sunscreens; and curbed runoff of agricultural chemicals into the sea. This year, Palau established a marine sanctuary to protect the majority of its waters, an area larger than the state of California.

Palau is especially vulnerable to rising sea levels, and Remengesau has been a powerful voice in calling on world leaders to address the climate crisis. "Our environment determines our health. Our environment determines our economy," he said in 2016 at Palau's first-ever conservation symposium. "Our environment is the basis of our cultural heritage and identity."



VILLA COPENHAGEN

Adaptive reuse is nothing new, but few hotels combine sumptuousness and sustainability as successfully as the 390-room Villa Copenhagen—opening April 1 inside a neo-Baroque post office in the heart of Denmark’s capital. In an unusual move for the industry, the Preferred Hotels & Resorts property (*pictured*), led by managing director Peter Høgh Pedersen, has pledged to hew to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals—a set of 17 holistic principles for building a more just future. Villa Copenhagen’s ethos, termed “conscious luxury,” includes material comforts and beautiful design, of course, but also demands fair labor standards and the creation of community gathering spaces. It means maximizing local purchasing and minimizing waste, such as choosing conference-room chairs made out of plastic dredged from the ocean. This philosophy meets the real world in the property’s Earth Suite: a space designed by local firm Earth Studio that features brick and wood salvaged from the original post office, textiles woven from recycled plastic, and furniture by sustainable Danish manufacturer Mater. villacopenhagen.com; doubles from \$210.

Gone Rural

For nearly 30 years, Gone Rural has created jobs for skilled but impoverished women in Eswatini—the nation known as Swaziland until 2018. The UN ranks Eswatini in the bottom 15 percent of the world’s nations when measuring gender equity, with especially low female participation in the formal labor force. The company hires local women to produce woven baskets in complex patterns (*pictured*) and striking home wares from indigenous materials, such as *lutindzi* grass, that fuse traditional craft with contemporary design. Thanks to Gone Rural, women across the country have become breadwinners. Through a program called Rural Post, shoppers can even correspond online with the more than 800 artisans on the payroll—like Siphwe Mngometulu, who earned enough money with Gone Rural to build a new home for herself and her kids. Travelers can also take a tour of the workshop and a guided visit to a local community. goneruralswazi.com.



Páramo

This British outdoor brand collaborates with the Colombia-based nonprofit Miquelina Foundation to make outdoor gear you can feel good about. The partnership sustains a workshop in Bogotá that trains and employs more than 500 women annually, particularly former sex workers, drug addicts, and victims of human trafficking.



“This partnership gives vulnerable people valuable opportunities,” says founder Nick Brown. “More than 80 percent of Páramo’s annual production occurs at Miquelina.” Between

the ethical business model and the retailer’s choice not to use effective-but-toxic perfluorinated compounds for its waterproofing, it’s no wonder that conscientious adventurers, including British explorer Ranulph Fiennes and researchers working for the British Antarctic Survey, have embraced the brand. paramo-clothing.com.

GLOBAL VISION AWARDS



Julia Jackson

“I ask you to be a steward of the earth,” Julia Jackson said last April to the 250 attendees of the inaugural Grounded Summit in Sonoma, California. “We need to collaborate, and we need to move quickly. Your task? Spread the word and get grounded.”

There are, of course, plenty of conferences on climate change. What makes the Grounded Summit different is the Kendall-Jackson wine heiress’s remarkable ability to bring important, sometimes idiosyncratic voices into the same room. Among those on the intentionally eclectic roster were venture capitalists funding eco-revolutionary technologies, indigenous leaders battling Big Oil in the Amazon, Arctic-ice researchers, and top foundation executives.

One major topic of discussion was the global rise in wildfires, an issue that hit home soon after. In October, the Kincade fire swept across Sonoma County—tearing through the Jackson family vineyards and destroying her Geyserville home. But the loss only bolstered her resolve. Last month, in wine country, she hosted the second Grounded Summit. The theme? “Accelerate and Connect.” grounded.org.

COURTESY OF GONE RURAL. ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID SPARSHOTT. PORTRAIT ILLUSTRATION BY SAM KERR. OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF VILLA COPENHAGEN



THE BREAKERS

While travelers will notice touches like the therapeutic sand-quartz massage bed and a chromotherapy tub at the Palm Beach, Florida, hotel's spa, they probably won't notice the remarkably holistic human-resources program designed to foster employees' well-being.

Each of the 2,200 staffers, from the front-desk agents and bellhops to the managers, can get free nutrition and fitness training with an on-site advisor. During the growing season (typically November to mid-May), the 124-year-old hotel hosts a weekly, low-cost farmers' market so that staffers have easy access to healthy food. Physicians are available for free 24/7 consultations through a telemedicine program, and the hotel goes beyond the usual 401(k) savings plan and company match, offering free financial counseling. To support

employees' charitable interests, the Breakers also allots up to 16 annual paid hours per person for community-service projects. In 2019, workers contributed just shy of 24,000 hours to local and national charities; major beneficiaries included Habitat for Humanity, the Palm Beach County Food Bank, and a homeless-outreach center called St. Ann Place. All told, this 360-degree approach has resulted in an impressive 79 percent retention rate among the staff, whose pride in being there is palpable in every guest interaction. *thebreakers.com*; doubles from \$700.

▲

The Breakers takes advantage of all that Florida sunshine to host a weekly farmers' market for staffers during growing season.