

2017
THE VANGUARD

HELEN HILL

BEKS NDLOVU

ABBY FALIK

STUDIO TACK

LARRY PIMENTEL

NOAH PURCELL

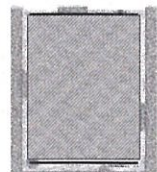
GLEN FU & ZOEV ZUO

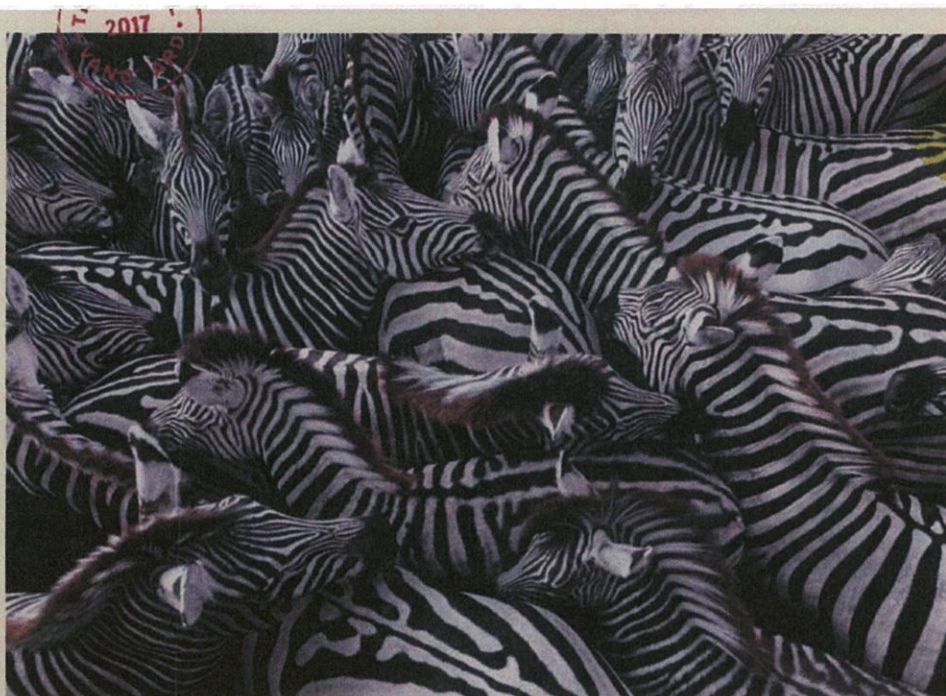
JONATHAN TISCH

PAM CODISPOTI

Visionaries who harness the power of travel to make a difference

BY JENNIFER FLOWERS





01.

AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS

Beks Ndlovu

The boundary-breaking founder of an up-and-coming safari lodge company brings travelers closer to the natural beauty of his homeland.



► The first elephants Beks Ndlovu ever tracked were the ones he found in his mother's banana grove. The day he saw them—15 in all—Ndlovu, the CEO of Zimbabwe-

based African Bush Camps, was 10 years old. There was a drought that year, and wild animals had begun to creep over from nearby Hwange National Park to ransack gardens in Ndlovu's village near Hwange Town.

"My family and I were banging pots and pans to chase the elephants out of our garden," recalls

Ndlovu, 41. "When they left, I followed them for over three miles into the middle of the bush and got within 40 yards of the herd. A mother elephant turned around, and I thought she was going to charge. I remember taking off and running until I got home. At that point I thought, 'Wow, this is quite an adventure.'"

Several years later, that first thrilling elephant chase turned into a career. Today, Hwange National Park is the site of Somalisa, the flagship of African Bush Camps' 11-property collection. Founded in 2006, Somalisa gives guests the

chance to see the same kinds of elephant herds Ndlovu followed in his youth. Ndlovu's reason for building a camp near his village is clear: He intends to create a mutually beneficial relationship between tourism and the landscape he grew up in. That's why he launched the African Bush Camps Foundation concurrently with his first safari camp. For every night's stay, \$10 goes toward community projects, scholarships for 300 children, and skill-building programs and small-business loans for local entrepreneurs.

As one of the few

black lodge owners in Africa, Ndlovu knows he is a role model. He started at the bottom of the ladder in the safari world, spending his school holidays chopping firewood and extinguishing lanterns. He worked his way up to become a guide for Wilderness Safaris and other companies, and eventually started his own private guiding company. Then he founded African Bush Camps. It was a trail he had to blaze on his own: At

the time, he didn't know a single black African who owned a safari company.

This year, African Bush Camps has served more than 7,000 guests at its camps in Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Botswana.

"There aren't many black CEOs or safari camp owners, so there's often a double take when I show up," says Ndlovu. "Being able to deliver consistently is what's allowed me to organically grow the business."

Wildlife sightings on an African Bush Camps safari are likely to include elephants, wildebeests, buffalo, giraffes, lions, hyenas, antelope, and zebras.



02.

LOEWS HOTELS & CO.

Jonathan Tisch

The successful hotelier finds multiple ways to support local communities and the people who work in the travel industry.

▶ Perhaps it's Jonathan Tisch's lifelong involvement in hospitality that has made him such a champion of it.

The CEO and chairman of Loews Hotels & Co. grew up in the Loews Regency in New York City, doing odd jobs alongside the staff. Those days in his family's hotel showed him the power of travel to make the world—and the economy—better, creating jobs, and, perhaps more important, making even more destinations worth visiting.

"The travel and tourism industry is the largest employer in the world, and in our country alone, there are close to 15 million direct and indirect jobs in travel and tourism," Tisch says.

Tisch has made plenty of direct impact on the industry through Loews, which now runs 24 hotels across the country. But his indirect impact has been even more profound.

In 2016, New York University honored his years of support by putting his name on the Jonathan M. Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism, a key incubator for future leaders in the field. He has served as the head of the U.S. Travel Association, a nonprofit group that supports the growth of the U.S. travel industry, and has met with many members of Congress to help them understand how many people's livelihoods depend on travel.

"It all comes back to the humanity of travel," Tisch says. "These men and women have made a decision to work in the largest industry in the world, and we have a responsibility to help them take care of their families and grow their careers. We can do better for them, and we can do more."

03.

CHARLESTON AREA CVB

Helen Hill

The tourism expert helped turn South Carolina's largest city into an internationally acclaimed destination.



▶ Downtown Charleston is a window into colonial America: cobblestone streets, jasmine-scented alleyways, antebellum buildings no taller than the church steeples that dot the city. But that charming veneer is only one piece of the story

that Helen Hill, the CEO of the Charleston Area Convention and Visitors Bureau, wants to tell.

"The reality is, we have a lot of history in Charleston that's not pretty," Hill says. "We're not selling a version of the Old South in hoop skirts. We are a real place, and we want to show visitors who we really are."

Contemporary Charleston has several draws: a flourishing food scene with nationally

known chefs such as Mike Lata and Sean Brock; swimmable beaches near downtown; boutique shops and hotels that have upped the city's style ante in recent years.

And then there are the city's darker sides, which Hill doesn't shy away from. That might mean walking visitors through Boone Hall Plantation to share with them the daily lives of slaves. Or encouraging them to visit Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, the site of the 2015 shooting in which nine people were killed by a white supremacist gunman, a tragedy that, Hill affirms, brought the community closer in striving for racial

harmony.

Hill's approach is working. Charleston attracts more than 5 million visitors a year. Most tourists used to come from within a six-hour drive, but now, thanks to improved air service, the top source of visitors is New York City.

And one thing never changes, Hill says. "We have great people in Charleston. They still stop in the street to give you directions."

The Zero George, pictured below, is one of the many stylish boutique hotels to arrive in Charleston in recent years.



OPPOSITE PAGE FROM TOP: FRANK LANTING/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC CREATIVE. COURTESY OF AFRICAN BUSH CAMPS. THIS PAGE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF LOEWS HOTELS & CO.; ROBIN KNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY; PETER FRANK EDWARDS/REXUS.

04.

STUDIO TACK

Ruben Caldwell, Jou-Yie Chou, Leigh Salem & Brian Smith

The innovative team designs lodgings that tell their own stories and resonate with a creative-class clientele.

► Scribner's Catskill Lodge is one of the most stylish new arrivals in the bucolic mountains of upstate New York.

But beyond the 38-room lodge's sleek wood floors and handmade leather chairs, there are quirks that

evoke the building's 1960s past: a mirror on the ceiling of one of the bedrooms, an enormous deer head mounted on the wall in Prospect, the lodge's restaurant.

Scribner's is a prime example of what Studio Tack does so well. The

Brooklyn-based design and development group's nine hotels are the just-right retreats you want to keep in your back pocket for a weekend getaway.

Many of them are repurposed buildings in cool destinations (Lake Tahoe; Jackson, Wyoming) and occasionally unexpected ones (Saratoga Springs, New York; the Delaware shore). They're affordable and intimate, have handsome public spaces, and always tell a story about their locations.

"There's some sort of significance to all of our projects, whether it's architectural, cultural, or geographic," says Jou-Yie Chou, one of Studio Tack's four partners. "It would be hard to produce anywhere else."

Chou joined forces with Leigh Salem, Brian Smith, and Ruben Caldwell in 2013 to complete their first

hotel project, the 16-room Dogfish Inn in Delaware, commissioned by the Dogfish Head brewery as a place for visitors to sleep post-imbibing.

Since then, the team has sharpened its approach with each new project, creating lodgings that appeal to a young and urban creative class.

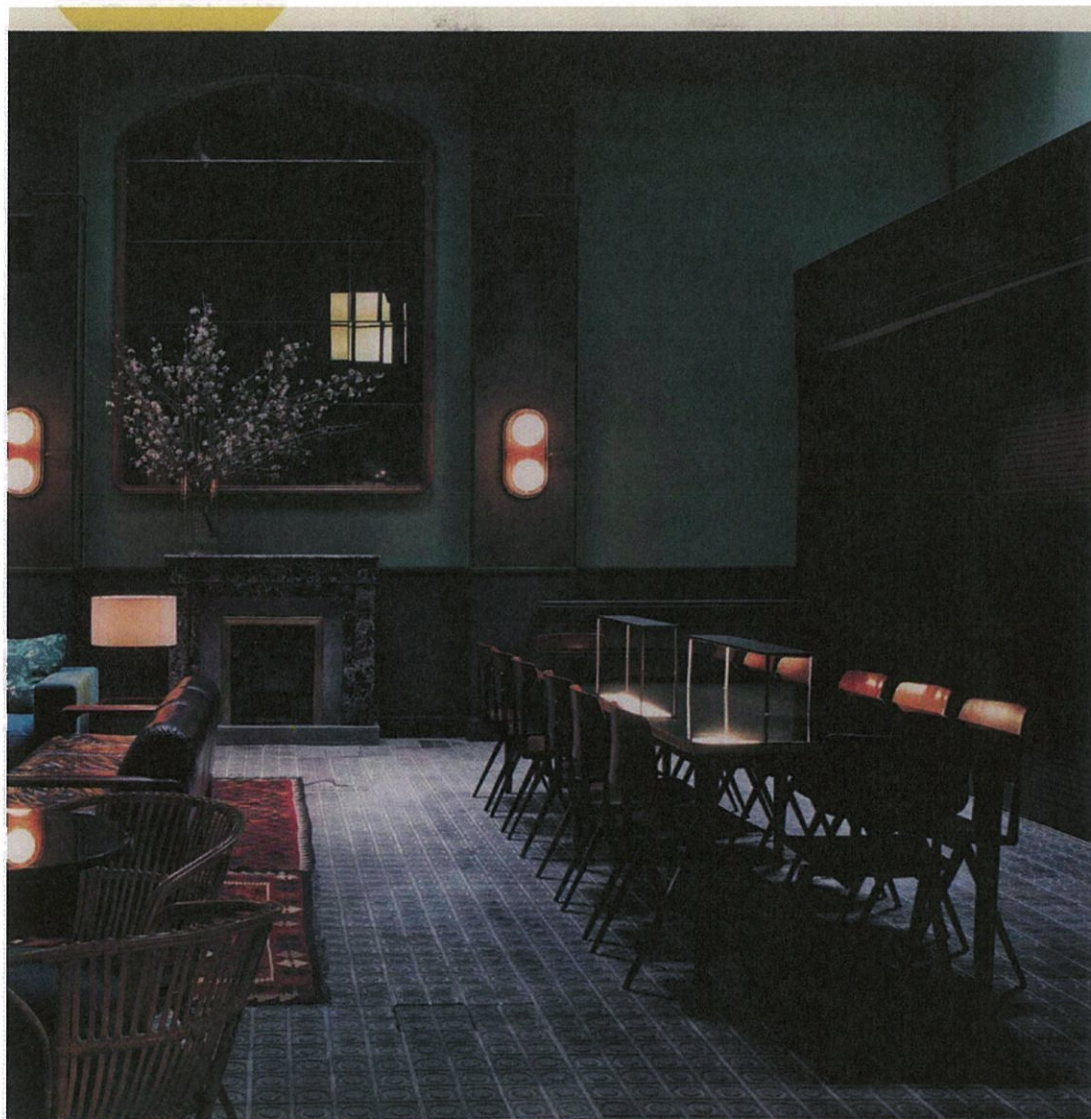
"We're always trying to dive into what the story is about the people who will be using the place and how it fits with the local vibe," says Caldwell.

LEFT: MERIKELL ARJALAGUER
 ABOVE: CHEYENNE PERSCH



The Studio Tack design team (above) first came together in 2012 and has completed a wide range of lodging projects, including Casa Bonay (right) in Barcelona, Spain.





Situated at the base of South Lake Tahoe's Heavenly Mountain, the spare but snappy Coachman, stocked with cozy Woolrich blankets and high-

end Frette linens, is a nod to the resort's midcentury roots. The Brentwood Hotel, a former motor lodge in Saratoga Springs, New York, is a 12-room retreat

next to a famous horse-racing track. Countryside flourishes such as gilt antique mirrors and vintage oil paintings channel the town's old-world charm.

The Anvil Hotel in Jackson, Wyoming, with its rustic, Shaker-inspired interiors and iron bed frames, might best be labeled "lumberjack chic."

The main idea, though, Chou explains, is that guests should feel inspired to escape into their surroundings. "We love for people to go to

these properties and have an amazing time, enjoy being there, and use them as a base to go explore the area. That's really what it's all about."



05.

GLOBAL CITIZEN YEAR

Abby Falik

The visionary entrepreneur bridges education and travel for students across the nation.



▶ In 2016, former President Obama's daughter Malia took a year off before starting college. Her decision made headlines—but Abby Falik, the founder and CEO of Global Citizen Year, hopes that someday soon, such a choice will be completely expected.

Falik founded Global Citizen Year in 2010 to send high school students to developing countries, including Brazil, Ecuador, India, and Senegal,

where they live with host families and apprentice with a wide range of local organizations, such as schools, agricultural cooperatives, and government ministries of education and health. Most students have graduated from high school, have been accepted into college, and are deferring entry for a year. She calls her program a "bridge year," one that can teach kids the rich lessons of travel.

"It's a new on-ramp into college that helps kids develop empathy, creativity, and an entrepreneurial spirit," Falik says. "These are things you can't learn in a

classroom."

Since its inception, Global Citizen Year has accepted 600 students, and in 2017 the number of participants jumped from 100 to 150.

"There's a growing recognition that lives are getting longer," Falik says, "and that college is crammed against the front end of a person's life before they have opportunities to explore and figure out who they are and what they're about."

Seven years in, Falik already sees the huge impact Global Citizen Year has made on program alumni such as Ami Hanna, who spent a year in a rural village in Senegal when she was 18. Within that year, her host sister,

who was also 18, was married off to a man she had never met and was halfway through her first pregnancy by the time Hanna returned home. The experience inspired Hanna to become passionate about family planning and sexual health and to pursue a post-college career as a doula.

Falik's long-term vision is to grow her organization to the size and impact of Teach for America or the Peace Corps. In the meantime, Global Citizen Year's biggest hurdle is to make the bridge year a normal and accessible part of the U.S. education system. "I want us to reach a point," Falik says, "where you feel left out if you don't do it."

More than 50 percent of Global Citizen Year's students are people of color, 80 percent receive financial aid, and a third are granted full scholarships.



06.

WASHINGTON STATE SOLICITOR GENERAL

Noah Purcell

The law officer helped lead the fight to put the Trump administration's travel ban on hold.

▶ As Noah Purcell watched chaos descend on airports across the nation over the last weekend of January, he knew someone needed to challenge the executive order that denied entry into the United States to citizens of seven predominantly Muslim countries. Purcell, Washington State's solicitor general, became a pivotal member of the team that built and argued the case that brought the Trump administration's original travel ban to a halt.

"It seemed the order was done to keep a discriminatory campaign promise to target Muslims rather than for actual security reasons," Purcell recalls. "It showed a lack of thought and care to the legal issues."

To Purcell, the legal issues were clear. They included a violation of the First Amendment by disfavoring one religion, a violation of the Immigration and Nationality Act by discriminating based on country of origin, and a lack of due process for those affected because there was no way for them to prove why they weren't a risk.

Purcell's boss, Washington State Attorney General Bob Ferguson, gave the green light for Purcell and his team to get to work. "Nobody slept very much that weekend," says Purcell. "But we had to move quickly—every hour people were literally being turned away."

The case was filed on the Monday following the ban. On Friday, a U.S. District Judge ruled in favor of a temporary restraining order, subsequently upheld by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

"People should see the United States as a beacon for freedom and opportunity," Purcell says, "and the travel ban really sent the opposite message."

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF GLOBAL CITIZEN YEAR; COURTESY OF NOAH PURCELL; COURTESY OF GLOBAL CITIZEN YEAR



07.

54TRAVELER

Glen Fu & Zoey Zuo

The couple founded a travel outfitter that's changing the way Chinese travelers see the world.

► In 2003, Glen Fu organized the first-ever extended trip of the travel club at Shanghai University of Finance and Economics: a 48-day journey to Tibet. Only one other student signed up: Zoey Zuo. But it was the

start of something.

The couple fell in love on the trip—with each other and with a kind of travel that was rare in China at that time. Since the government started relaxing its travel policy in 1978, the Chinese

have become the world's largest traveler demographic. But many of their trips follow boiler-plate mass-market itineraries offered by Chinese travel agencies. Fu and Zuo wanted to make local connections, go off the beaten path, and step out of their comfort zone.

Fast-forward to today, and they have grown the club into 54Traveler, a company with 30,000 clients a year. Inspired by Lonely Planet founder Tony

Wheeler, Fu and Zuo, along with their staff, test all their itineraries before they offer them. They've focused on creating affordable, small-group trips for travelers ages 16 to 45. They started by leading trips within China and found an eager audience: 54Traveler has had 40 percent revenue growth every year since 2007. And as of 2015, when the company finally obtained its government license to organize international trips—a process begun in 2007—outbound business has doubled annually. Now they visit 18 countries, including Russia, Myanmar, Iran, Jordan, Sri Lanka, and Iceland. In Morocco—54's

most popular destination in 2017—the itinerary includes camel rides deep into the desert, a visit to a local date market, and a meal in a Berber family home. In Jordan, travelers take a city walk with a local in Amman, visit with Bedouins in their tents in Wadi Rum, and experience Petra by moonlight. The trips closer to home are just as eye-opening: One China itinerary takes travelers to a mountain village in Qinghai Province and includes a stay in a Muslim home. Another involves a visit to a remote monastery in the Qilian Mountains, where guests spend time with a monk and learn about his beliefs and daily

54Traveler gives its clients immersive experiences, such as a meal with locals, pictured above, in China's Yunnan Province.

routines. "Many of our guests come from very big cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai," Zuo says. "Most of them have never been to such remote areas—they usually don't even know these kinds of places exist in China."

Adds Fu: "We like to change how our clients see the world. That's really what inspires and encourages us to do what we do."



08.

AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES

Larry Pimentel

The head of Azamara Club Cruises was a leader in bringing experiences to the fore of his cruise line—and the cruise industry.



► A four-hour drive into the Omani desert delivers guests to a Bedouin camp in the middle of nowhere. The Bedouin hosts will cook local dishes using vegetables the guests have never tasted, play instruments they've never heard, and spend time with them by a roaring fire and under the stars late into the night. Then guests will sleep in tents amid a sea of undulating sand dunes.

It's not what you'd expect as part of a typical night on a cruise. But shaking things

up is exactly the point, according to Larry Pimentel, the president and CEO of Azamara Club Cruises.

"We specialize in destination immersion. That is our whole reason for existing," Pimentel says. "Our one major goal is to connect guests to the places they visit."

In 2010, when Azamara Club Cruises launched, the cruise industry had a reputation for off-the-shelf excursions. Azamara Club Cruises offers smaller ships—two vessels carrying 690 passengers each—that can reach smaller ports, such as Bangkok or Bordeaux. Guests can also stay longer in those ports, where they enjoy exclusive experi-

ences: something as elaborate as an opera performance by a trio of tenors in Livorno, Italy, or as simple as a meal at the hole-in-the-wall that serves the best souvlaki in Athens, Greece.

Pimentel didn't even think he liked cruising when he joined the industry in 1989, after selling his Hawaii-based tour company to Expedia. "When I first got to the cruise world, my perception was that they were exceptional at delivering food and terrible at delivering the destination," he says. "They were too

hung up on material luxury such as fine china and high-thread-count sheets and not focused enough on what the great value in travel was."

Before joining Azamara in 2009, Pimentel cofounded SeaDream Yacht Club and served as president and CEO of Cunard Line. At Azamara Club Cruises, Pimentel has overseen the addition of more than 1,000 new experiences this year alone. Plans for future pre- and post-cruise offerings include a trip on the iconic Venice Simplon-Orient-Express train that travels between London and Venice.

"At the end of the day," Pimentel says, "we're not selling cruises. We're selling experiences that allow guests to evolve and grow."

Pimentel's destination-focused formula has attracted a new clientele. About one-fifth of Azamara Club Cruises' guests have never been on a cruise ship before.



09.

CHASE SAPPHIRE RESERVE

Pam Codispoti

The Chase executive launched a game-changing credit card for a new generation of experience-hungry travelers.

► The latest status symbol for affluent globe-trotters is a credit card. In case you missed the frenzy by the water cooler, Chase Sapphire Reserve—launched in the summer of 2016—became a sensation overnight. The card is geared toward a younger generation, but it was created for travelers of any age who define luxury as a wealth of experiences rather than the accumulation of things.

"We wanted to design a card that would tap into that emotional side of being a lifelong explorer," says Pam Codispoti, president of Chase Branded Cards at Chase and the driving force behind the card. "It's less about 'I've arrived' and more about 'I'm on a lifelong journey.'"

In August 2016, news of the card's perks—which originally included a sign-on bonus of 100,000 points—spread like wildfire on social media. Interest escalated so fast that Chase temporarily ran out of metal cards shortly after the launch.

For an annual \$450 fee, perks include TSA PreCheck, Global Entry, access to partner lounges, accelerated points for travel and dining, and access to exclusive events, ranging from a private dinner at Michelin-starred Le Bernardin in New York City to passes for the Sundance Film Festival in Utah.

Codispoti knew that the Chase Sapphire Reserve card would speak to a group of travelers who she describes as savvy, in-the-know, and affluent. "They're the ones defining the future of travel," she says. "It's the right product at the right time, with early adopters creating buzz."

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