TRAVEL + LEISURE
SPECIAL

2011 GLOBAL VISION AWARDS

TRAVEL IS OFTEN ABOUT WHAT YOU TAKE AWAY FROM A PLACE, BUT THE BEST JOURNEYS SHOULD ALSO ENRICH THE DESTINATIONS YOU TRAVEL THROUGH. THE WINNERS OF THE 2011 TRAVEL + LEISURE GLOBAL VISION AWARDS—SELECTED BY OUR EXPERT PANEL OF JUDGES—DO JUST THAT. PLUS, 18 TRIPS THAT ALLOW YOU TO EXPERIENCE THE WINNERS.

2011 JUDGES

JOSÉ ANDRÉS
Chef and owner of ThinkFoodGroup

BONNIE BURNHAM
President and CEO of the World Monuments Fund

LAUREN BUSH
Cofounder, creative director, and CEO of FEED Projects and chairman of the board for the FEED Foundation

MEGAN EPLER WOOD
Executive director of the Planterra Foundation and founder of the International Ecotourism Society

PREMAL SHAH
President of microfinance website kiva.org

DR. JOSEPH STIGLITZ
Nobel Prize–winning economist and cochair of Columbia University’s Committee on Global Thought

KATE STOHR AND CAMERON SINCLAIR
Founders of the nonprofit design collective Architecture for Humanity

EDITED BY AMY FARLEY, NINA FREDERZ, AND NIKKI GOLDSTEIN. REPORTED BY LISA CHENG, DARRELL HAYTRAY, STERLING WILCOX, AND LINDSEY Olander.

ILLUSTRATED BY GRACIA LAM

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THE WINNERS

SUSTAINABILITY

SUSTAINABLE DESIGN
SFO TERMINAL 2
SAN FRANCISCO

As the only LEED Gold-registered terminal in the United States, San Francisco International Airport’s Terminal 2 sets a bold benchmark for airport sustainability—without compromising style or utility. The Hansler-designed gates have multifunctional green amenities: hydration stations enable fliers to fill water bottles from dedicated faucets; gate-side restaurants serve regional, organic food; and the baggage-claim area, which looks like a piece of kinetic art, is part of an innovative ventilation system.

TAKE THE TRIP Don’t miss SFO’s artwork, including Janet Echelman’s dramatic colored nets, which hang over the “recompose” area, flysfo.com.

FROM THE JURY
José Andrés, chef

"IT’S IMPORTANT TO SEE BIG INDUSTRY LEADERS LIKE LUFTHANSA LOOKING AT THEIR OPERATIONS AND MAKING ADVANCES THAT OTHERS CAN FOLLOW."

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION
LUFTHANSA GERMANY

Environmentalism isn’t an ethos usually associated with major airlines, but Lufthansa has made admirable strides to lower both its own and the industry’s CO2 emissions. It was the first carrier to test biofuel in normal flight operations—paving the way for other airlines—and has greened everything from its engine-cleaning routine to cabin equipment, resulting in a full 23 percent emissions reduction. Meanwhile, Lufthansa’s HelpAlliance aid organization has raised almost $7.7 million for health and education in Africa, South America, and Asia.

TAKE THE TRIP Lufthansa’s Frankfurt Airport fleet is significantly reducing noise pollution with new mufflers: verantwortung.lufthansa.com.

ECO TRAVEL
NATURE AIR COSTA RICA

Nature Air isn’t satisfied with merely being the world’s first carbon-neutral airline: by 2021, the company hopes to be “carbon-positive,” actually taking CO2 out of the atmosphere. While the carrier is sourcing locally produced biofuels and using biodiesel to power its ground operations, the centerpiece of Nature Air’s efforts is its ongoing purchase of carbon credits, which offer funds to Costa Rican landowners who have agreed to conserve the tropical forests of the Osa Peninsula. It’s a corporate ethos that addresses global concerns by investing in local communities.


GREEN LUXURY
KING PACIFIC LODGE, A ROSEWOOD RESORT BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

This 17-room floating wilderness lodge on BC’s remote northern coast made headlines in 2006 for its role in establishing protection for the 21-million-acre Great Bear Rainforest, which surrounds the property. But King Pacific is also going green with improved efficiencies: filtration facilities that use glacial river water; a river-hydro plant and solar panels to reduce energy use; and a food and beverage program based on locally sourced ingredients. To top it off, the company has committed to halving its carbon footprint by the end of 2012.

TAKE THE TRIP Wildlife tours in the Great Bear Rainforest provide rare glimpses of the white Kermode bear. 888/532-5464; kingpacificlodge.com; from $4,800 per person, all-inclusive.
CONSERVATION

THE WINNERS

LAND MANAGEMENT

MANYARA RANCH TANZANIA

The 35,000-acre Manyara Ranch Conservancy, on Tanzania’s northern border, serves as an important wildlife corridor in a country whose population has increased by 230 percent in just 40 years. Through partnerships with national conservation organizations, Manyara is working to restore the region’s habitat and make wildlife protection a profitable enterprise for the resident Masai community. Manyara’s luxury tented camp, which opened last year, expands the mission, offering guests game-viewing opportunities that generate revenue for the conservancy while securing a future for the area it shelters.

TAKE THE TRIP Ride alongside giraffes and zebras on one of Manyara Ranch’s horseback trips. 255-27/254-5284; manyararanch.com; doubles from $1,240, all-inclusive.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

INKATERRA LIMA, PERU

In its 36 years, this Peruvian company has evolved from a small rainforest inn serving scientists to a world-renowned luxury eco-lodge brand. The cornerstones of its environmental accomplishments are the creation of the 42,000-acre Reserva Amazonica and, more recently, a 2.4 million-acre protected marine area in the Mancora region. What’s more, Inkaterra is also actively involved in dozens of conservation projects, including the monitoring of butterflies, endangered bears, and native orchids, among other species.

TAKE THE TRIP View hummingbirds and colorful tanagers on a bird walk at the Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, 665/242-2885; inkaterra.com; doubles from $249.

MARINE PROTECTION

MISOOL ECO RESORT RAJA AMPAT, INDONESIA

In a small, pristine corner of the Indonesian archipelago, the 11-cottage Misool Eco Resort has assumed an enormous responsibility: protecting one of the world’s most biologically diverse regions. Founded in 2005 by a group of divers and conservationists, Misool first formed a 165-square-mile haven for marine life. In 2008, Misool extended the area to 470 square miles, successfully petitioning the government to create a shark and ray sanctuary in the Raja Ampat Islands—the first of its kind in Indonesia.

TAKE THE TRIP Japanese artisans created Misool’s cottages, set on a lagoon. 62-895/371-0652; misoolecoresort.com; from $370 per person, doubles, all-inclusive, seven-night minimum.
THE WINNERS

DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY BUILDING
RANCHO LA PUERTA  TECATE, MEXICO

For a decade, this destination spa’s Fundación La Puerta has been a major force in transforming the once-polluted Tecate River into a point of pride for a city on the rise. It also helped build a 28-acre urban park that includes a plaza, a sports field, and an environmental center that holds workshops for both children and adults. The impact of these classes has been profound: one foundation-supported group has developed a successful recycling business and has turned a riverside garbage dump into a community garden that now grows produce for local taco trucks.

TAKE THE TRIP  A stay at Rancho La Puerta can include morning hikes, aromatic hydrotherapy at the spa, and Mexican cooking lessons at the resort’s own culinary school. 800/444-3580; rancholapuerta.com; doubles from $445; seven-day minimum.

CORPORATE INNOVATION
AUSTIN LEHMAN ADVENTURES  BILLINGS, MONTANA

What do to with 120 used bikes in need of replacement? The lazy might trash them, and the thoughtful might donate them, but Austin Lehman owner Dave Austin did something else entirely. He brought them to Ngoma, Namibia—where the company operates a luxury wildlife tour—and helped locals turn them into a rental and repair business, cleverly housing it in the bikes’ shipping container. The shop became self-sufficient within 10 months, inspiring Austin to create the nonprofit Wheels of Change. The benefits are significant: 10 million bikes are discarded annually in the United States, and each can give someone in the developing world vital access to water, schools, jobs, and medical facilities.

TAKE THE TRIP  Cyclists on Austin Lehman’s Namibia Family Adventure and new Kenya Adventure trips can visit bike shops set up by Wheels of Change. austinehman.com.

LOCAL OUTREACH
JOURNEYS WITHIN  TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA/ASIA

A boutique tour company with a big heart, Journeys Within has demonstrated a remarkable commitment to the Southeast Asian communities it travels through, supporting a series of programs (university scholarships; language classes; clean-water initiatives; microfinance funds) in Cambodia, Laos, and Burma. In Cambodia, it sent 70 students to university in exchange for five to 10 hours a week of service on a Journeys Within-sponsored project. The microfinance arm, which offers low-interest loans to budding entrepreneurs, has changed lives—its 95 percent payback rate is a clear testament to its success.

TAKE THE TRIP  Discover Siem Reap during Journeys Within’s six-day Only on a Beaten Track trip, where you can hike to ancient temples and visit a working silk farm. 877/445-3672; journeys-within.com; from $1,100 per person, double.

FROM THE JURY

Megan Esler Wood, director, Planeterra Foundation

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RANCHO LA PUERTA’S VISION AND USE OF ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING IS A MODEL FOR LATIN AMERICA.
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THE WINNERS

PRESERVATION

ARTISAN REVIVAL
WAAN AELÔN IN MAJEL (WAM) THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

The traditional Marshallese outrigger canoe was once considered among the finest sailing vessels in the world, until modern boats arrived and canoe construction became a dying art form. But thanks to the foresight of an American boat enthusiast and a few remaining experts, WAM emerged with hopes to revive the craft—and inspire a new generation. The program provides life-skills training and instruction in canoe-building to local youth, offering them marketable expertise in a place where more than 70 percent of young people are without jobs.

TAKE THE TRIP The WAM Visitors Center, on Majuro Island, lets travelers tour the workshops and sail in a canoe.

HERITAGE SITE
THE BANGALA CHETTINAD, INDIA

This 25-room heritage hotel, housed in a historic 1916 bungalow, sparked the cultural revitalization of Chettinad, a once-rich region of Tamil Nadu known for its opulent family estates. Most of these 18th- and 19th-century houses were on their way to ruin when, in 1999, the Meyappan family converted the Bangala into a hotel that showcases the region's heritage, from architecture and cuisine to artisan crafts. Bangala's success has resulted in the creation of four additional heritage hotels in the region—proof that a single, dedicated act can have lasting ramifications.

TAKE THE TRIP Learn how to make traditional Chettinad dishes such as tamarind crab curry and chicken-pepper fry at the Bangala's cooking demonstrations. 91-44/2433-4051; thebangala.com; doubles from $132, including breakfast.

“SO OFTEN, OLD HOUSES IN INDIA FALL INTO DECAY DUE TO THE COUNTRY'S COMPLICATED INHERITANCE LAWS—BANGALA IS AN INSPIRATION FOR WHAT COULD BE.”

FROM THE JURY

Joseph Sigel, economist
HISTORIC RESTORATION
AROU TEMPLE PROJECT BANDIAGARA, MALI
With its high walls and spiked turrets, the otherworldly mud-brick Arou Temple has been the focal point of the Bandiagara escarpment—a cliffside collection of 20 villages in central Mali—for more than 600 years. In recent decades, drought forced the Dogon people to abandon their traditional homes, and the Arou Temple began to crumble. Since 2005, Mission Culturelle de Bandiagara’s Arou Temple Project has worked to restore the temple and encourage repopulation—by constructing wells, planting trees, creating footpaths, and even establishing a craftsman village—while also renewing the Dogon’s pride in their cultural heritage.

TAKE THE TRIP Saga Tours’ two-week journey through Mali includes visits to Timbuktu, fishing outposts along the Niger River, and Dogon villages near Bandiagara. 223/667-4631; sagatours.com; $2,567 per person, double.

URBAN RENEWAL
CONSERVATORIO S.A. PANAMA CITY, PANAMA
When a real estate team set out to restore the National Music Conservatory in Panama City’s historic seafront district of Casco Viejo, they didn’t expect to convert the long-neglected neighborhood into a bona fide tourist destination. But that’s exactly what happened. As Conservatorio continued: renovating the neighborhood’s colonial-era buildings, it also developed a handful of boutique hotels, affordable housing, subsidized spaces for arts organizations, and a reputation for prioritizing local needs. What was once home to a gang, for example, is currently being transformed—by its former residents—into a hotel, while an abandoned school has become a incubator for small businesses.

TAKE THE TRIP Conservatorio’s S.A.’s new project, the American Trade Hotel—a former hangout for the Hijos Prodigios street gang—will open next year. conservatorioса.com; doubles from $220.

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...country, our private safari guide showed us that wonders came in all shapes and sizes.

Abercrombie & Kent

Katie Stohr and Cameron Sinclair, founders, Architecture For Humanity

"CONSERVATORIO'S APPROACH—USING TOURISM TO REVITALIZE AN INNER-CITY HISTORIC DISTRICT—IS SO RARELY DONE AND SO OFTEN NEEDED."
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THE WINNERS
LEADERSHIP

EDUCATION INITIATIVE
BANYAN TREE HOTELS & RESORTS
SINGAPORE

In certain corners of the world where tourism is a huge economic engine, a job in the hospitality industry can transform a life. In 2007, the luxury hotel and resort company Banyan Tree launched Seedlings, a brand-wide initiative to support the academic and personal development of disadvantaged youths. The program offers six years of one-on-one mentoring for kids ages 12 to 18—a long-term undertaking that includes college scholarships and paid internships for students interested in hospitality. Operating across 11 hotels with 46 mentors, Seedlings invests countless hours and dollars into providing a comprehensive, no-cost education for those who need it.

TAKE THE TRIP
Thatched-roof villas at the Banyan Tree Bintan resort, in Indonesia, feature private decks with outdoor bathtubs, just steps away from the South China Sea. 800/391-0458 banyantree.com; doubles from $550.
MORE
two-room suites

MORE
complimentary cocktails

MORE
free cooked-to-order breakfast

MORE stuff

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LEADERSHIP
(CONTINUED)

CORPORATE GREENING
KIMPTON HOTELS & RESTAURANTS UNITED STATES

Nor all eco-minded hotels need to shout their green credentials from their bee-keeping, produce-yielding rooftops. Case in point: Kimpton Hotels, which has maintained rigorous environmental standards since its inception 30 years ago. With its EarthCare program, Kimpton created a mandatory checklist of more than 100 eco-friendly practices for its 52 properties, including the use of in-room recycling bins, LED exit signs, water-efficient plumbing, and recycled toilet paper—all subtle, savvy touches with quantifiable impact. According to the company's calculations, Kimpton's 10 Bay Area properties alone save 20 million gallons of water a year, and installing CFL bulbs in those 2,181 guest rooms has removed approximately 3.2 million pounds of carbon dioxide annually.

TAKE THE TRIP Kimpton's Ink48, set in a former Manhattan printing house, employs an in-house forager who sources ingredients from regional farms for the hotel's Print restaurant. 877/845-8869; ink48.com; doubles from $359.

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FOOTPRINT REDUCTION
SIX SENSES RESORTS & SPAS ASIA

Few luxury hotel groups have approached carbon reduction as enthusiastically as Six Senses. The resort and spa company uses a comprehensive carbon calculator to measure not just the footprint of all 14 properties but also guests' air-travel emissions. By offsetting energy consumption with contributions to its own Carbon Sense Fund, Six Senses aims to be entirely carbon-neutral by 2020—and it's well on its way. From 2009 to 2010, the company's total emissions decreased by 6 percent; the company's Maldives flagship resort, Soneva Fushi, is on track to fully decarbonize by 2015.

TAKE THE TRIP Built to mimic the sloping dunes of Vietnam's Da Nang Beach, all 50 open-air villas at Six Senses Con Dao are cooled using natural ventilation. 84-64/583-1222; sixsenses.com; doubles from $685.

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GRASSROOTS OUTREACH
PUNTACANA RESORT & CLUB DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Conceived as an ecological reserve and hotel 42 years ago, Puntacana has grown into a sprawling, 15,000-acre development encompassing a hotel, private villas, an airport, and a marina. But the organization is just as good at building foundations as facilities. Its Ecological Foundation set up a 1,500-acre reserve that now serves as a research base for universities and a sanctuary for endangered species. Meanwhile, the Puntacana Foundation has vastly improved the quality of life in the local working-class town of Veron, establishing a permanent health clinic that services 18,000 patients annually, a bilingual school with a vibrant scholarship program, and a polytechnic school—the only high school in Veron to offer free education.

TAKE THE TRIP PADI-certified pros from the Puntacana Aquatic Center lead Caribbean reef dives to spot manatees and nurse sharks. 809/959-2262; puntacana.com; doubles from $96.