



The women who help make Africa extraordinary

A Southern African safari simply wouldn't be the same without the people behind the scenes.

South Africa just celebrated its Women's Day, and some extra-ordinary women are some of the safari industry's unsung heroes: people whose passion, expertise and dedication help shape conservation, our hospitality, and the unforgettable experiences that define Southern Africa.

They are the guides who bring the bush to life, the conservationists protecting endangered wildlife, the chefs showcasing the flavours of a destination, and the winemakers capturing a sense of place in every bottle.

So here we shine a light on just a handful of the inspiring women making their mark across Southern Africa. While their work often happens quietly, their impact is felt in every safari, every conservation success and every lasting memory.



The Woman Behind the Safari

Sarah Barratt | Safari Guide of the Year 2026



Sarah Barratt, a guide in the Thornybush Game Reserve, made history when she was crowned Safari Guide of the Year 2026, becoming only the second woman to receive this prestigious title in the competition's 15-year history.

Growing up in the United Kingdom with a fascination for African wildlife, Sarah followed her passion to South Africa, where she has become one of the country's most respected safari guides. For her, guiding is about far more than identifying wildlife, it's about creating meaningful connections between people and nature.

South Africa is home to some of Africa's finest safari guides, giving guests the opportunity to experience the bush through the knowledge, passion and expertise of those who know it best.

The Women Protecting the Wild

The Black Mambas | The World's First All-Female Anti-Poaching Unit

The Black Mambas are the world's first all-female anti-poaching unit. Patrolling more than 20,000 hectares within South Africa's Greater Kruger National Park, these courageous women help protect one of the world's largest remaining rhino populations while standing on the frontline against wildlife crime.



But their mission extends far beyond the bush. As role models within their communities, the Black Mambas are helping to change perceptions by demonstrating that conservation offers a brighter future than poaching. Through education, outreach and their unwavering commitment to protecting wildlife, they are inspiring the next generation to become custodians of Africa's natural heritage.

Guests staying at Pondoro Game Lodge have the unique opportunity to meet the Black Mambas during their Wednesday and Saturday conservation experience. The visit includes a presentation by the team, a tour of the Nonwane Research Facility and fascinating insights into one of Africa's most inspiring conservation initiatives.



The Woman Behind the Vintage

Andrea Mullineux | Award-Winning Winemaker



Redefining South African winemaking on the international stage, Andrea Mullineux was named Winemaker of the Year by Wine Enthusiast magazine. She became the first South African and only the third woman to receive this prestigious honour, paving the way for future generations of female winemakers.

After gaining experience in renowned wine regions across France, California and South Africa, Andrea and her husband, chose to put down roots in the Western Cape Winelands. Their passion for expressing the unique character of the region quickly established Mullineux as one of South Africa's most celebrated wine producers, earning international acclaim and an unprecedented five Platter's Winery of the Year awards.

Guests can experience Andrea's award-winning wines at The Wine Studio on Leeu Estates in Franschhoek, where thoughtfully curated tastings showcase the distinctive terroir of the Swartland and the craftsmanship behind every vintage.

The Women Behind the Flavours

Cape Town's culinary scene has become one of the world's most exciting dining destinations, thanks to a new generation of talented chefs who are redefining South African cuisine. Blending local ingredients, creativity and a deep respect for seasonal produce, these women are creating some of the most exciting dining experiences.

Chef Anouchka Horn

Head Chef & Co-owner | Belly of the Beast

Inspired by childhood memories spent in her grandmother's kitchens, Anouchka Horn has become one of Cape Town's most celebrated chefs. Together with restaurateur Neil Swart, she has helped establish Belly of the Beast, Galjoen and Seebamboes as some of the city's most sought-after dining destinations, earning accolades for their innovative approach to locally inspired cuisine and intimate dining experiences.



Chef Roxy Mudie

Head Chef | The Waterside



As Head Chef at The Waterside at the V&A Waterfront, Roxy Mudie has earned recognition for her refined, seasonal menus that showcase the very best of South African produce. Under her leadership, The Waterside has become one of Cape Town's standout fine dining restaurants, receiving two stars at the prestigious Eat Out Restaurant Awards.

Whether it's an intimate chef's table experience or a beautifully crafted tasting menu overlooking Cape Town's iconic waterfront, these talented chefs offer another way to discover the flavours, creativity and stories that make South Africa so special.

Here's to wherever you travel to next!

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