

Egypt Shines through in Wanderlust's World Guide Awards

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Wanderlust, the go-to magazine for authentic and adventurous travel, has today announced the winners of its prestigious annual [World Guide Awards](#), with Egyptian guide Samer Saied taking the top gong at a ceremony at London's Royal Geographical Society on 6th October 2016.

Now in their 11th year, the Awards honour the very best in tour leaders and guides from across the world and they are the only global awards to exclusively recognise these often unsung heroes of the travel industry.

Despite a difficult few years for tourism in Egypt, the Awards should prove to be a huge boost for the country with local guide **Samer Saied** clinching **Gold** for his tours through Egypt's ancient sites and cultural landmarks, for travel company G Adventures. Securing the **Silver Award** this year was **Wipaporn Ord**, selected for her passion and enthusiasm when guiding across Thailand, Laos and Burma for All Points East and **Bopha Sok**, recognised for his fun but moving tours for G Adventures across Cambodia, taking **Bronze**.

The World Guide Awards invite *Wanderlust* readers and intrepid explorers from across the globe to nominate guides they felt went above and beyond to give travellers an unforgettable experience. This year saw thousands of guides from all over the world nominated, with winners selected by a team of industry experts including: *Wanderlust* Co-Founder and Editor-in-Chief **Lyn Hughes**; renowned author **Bill Bryson**; TV wildlife expert **Mark Carwardine**; travel industry expert and former guide **Derek Moore**; experienced wilderness and adventure guide **Myles Farnbank**; heritage specialist, travel writer and guide herself, **Sophie Campbell**, and *Rough Guides* founder **Mark Ellingham**.

Each guide was awarded a generous bursary kindly donated by Wanderlust to put towards community projects of their choice in their home country, as well as a variety of additional prizes provided by Swarovski Optic and Powertraveller.

Wanderlust co-founder Lyn Hughes commented: "Once again, these Awards have unearthed truly inspirational guides from across the globe who not only offer incredible experiences to clients, but provide a much-valued boost for tourism and support to the local communities that lie within their areas of expertise. Too often these beacons of the tourism market go unnoticed for the hard work they put in to the travel industry as a whole and that's exactly what we aim to highlight – the impressive work they do, as well as the high level at which they're valued by peers and clients."

"As ever, this year's finalists were all equally impressive, and were so difficult to put into the final winning order today. It is a brilliant result for Egypt, which has had an undoubtedly tough year."

Rasha Azaizi, Director of UK, Ireland and Nordic Markets at the Egyptian Tourism Authority, commented on Samer's win:

"On behalf of the Egyptian Tourism Authority, we are absolutely thrilled with this result. Samer is certainly a worthy winner, who regularly goes beyond the call of duty to make his client's trips truly remarkable experiences. As a trained Egyptologist, he holds expert knowledge of Egypt's history and culture. This, combined with his ability to shine a light on Egypt's ancient civilisation and bring to life its magical wonders, is second to none."

"Samer is passionate, friendly and highly educated, with a deep knowledge that he loves to share. He and his fellow guides are a key part of what makes cultural holidays in Egypt so distinctive and magical."

Details of the winners announced today are as follows:

Gold Award – Samer Saied, G Adventures

Samer took to the stage to great applause to collect his well-deserved Gold Award.

Samer's career began as an Egyptologist before becoming a guide for G Adventures, passing on his passion and knowledge for his country's ancient history – and how that shapes the Egypt of today – on to his clients. Not only honouring Samer for his guide work, judges were keen to highlight his dedication to

local communities across Egypt; coordinating a women's sewing project in Luxor and working as a Scout leader in Cairo in his spare time. Samer plans to use his £5,000 bursary supporting a number of Egyptian causes close to his heart, including the Magdi Yacoub Foundation's Aswan Heart Centre, the Saint George Scout Team in downtown Cairo and the new G Adventures For Good project in Egypt.

Judge Bill Bryson commended Samer's positive impact on those around him: "He inspires both his clients and his colleagues. He has changed lives, enriched people's experience and is a marvellous ambassador for his country."

Silver Award – Wipaporn Ord, All Points East

Wipaporn is one of the founders of All Points East, a tour specialist helping travellers discover the real South-East Asia. Originally born in Bangkok, Wipaporn has over 15 years of guiding experience under her belt, leading tours across Thailand, Burma and Laos, also drawing on her experience to coordinate projects for under-privileged hill-tribe children and their families in all three countries. Wipaporn plans to use her £2,500 bursary helping those in rural communities who she has encountered on her travels, such as aiding rural women in Burma sell handicrafts to passing tourists.

Judge Sophie Campbell commented: "Wi is such a charming person. She's both fun and caring – but organised – the big sister you want to travel with."

Bronze Award – Bopha Sok, G Adventures

Despite having only been guiding for three years, Bopha has made a lasting impression on all of his clients as a true people person. Growing up in a small village in Cambodia's Kampong Cham province, Bopha worked as a silk farmer and goldsmith while still at school, before heading to Siem Reap to begin his guiding career. Bopha encourages his clients to interact with locals, not only to give them a feel for the real Cambodia, but to provide his local community with invaluable language skills in turn. Bopha plans to put his £1,000 bursary towards supporting the New Hope Vocational Training Restaurant in Cambodia where he was a student. He also intends to sponsor some of the poorer youths in his home village, enabling them to go to university.

Judge Derek Moore highlighted Bopha's commendable leadership skills: "Bopha is clearly a brilliant communicator and excellent at group dynamics, as well as making everyone feel special."

The full results of the World Guide Awards 2016 will appear in the November issue of *Wanderlust* magazine, which will be on sale from 13th October 2016 priced £3.99. For more details on the above, please visit www.wanderlust.co.uk and www.worldguideawards.com.

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