

BAZAAR LIFE Travel

Meaningful Travel.

Want to stay on a private island and help save the turtles? What about building a school in Laos or getting involved in reforestation? The new wave of luxury travel is about preserving our world – think eco-tourism, voluntourism and educational experiences while on vacation. Judy Chapman looks at what experiences money can buy.

Visits to orphanages, constructing temples, building schools and reforestation might not sound like your dreamy postcard vacation, but what about living and working with isolated indigenous people? According to experts, the non-profit and eco-friendly sector – or ‘meaningful tourism’ – is starting to lead the travel industry.

“Meaning is the new money,” confirms Mark Wuttke, principal, the Wuttke Group. He describes a new mindset of ‘slow soul consumerism’ as creating more time, purpose and meaning in our lives to purchase authentic experiences. “By consciously exchanging quantity for quality, success for significance and things for experience is how many of us are choosing to create more time, balance, purpose and meaning in our lives,” he adds.

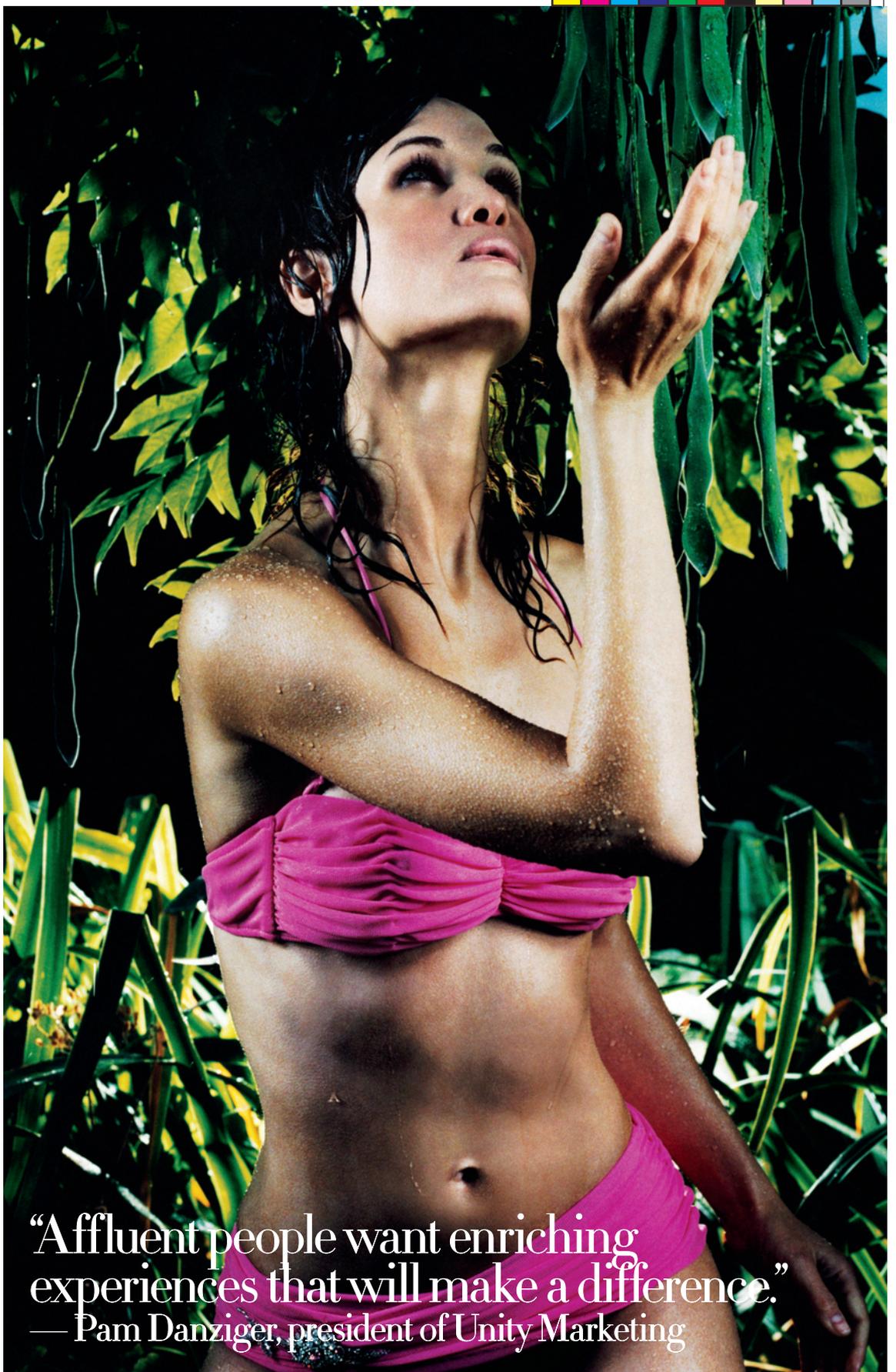
Lonely Planet’s *Code Green* book tracks 100 of the world’s best responsible travel experiences. From budget backpacking to serious luxury, all are linked by three principles: Tread lightly on the environment, immerse yourself in the culture and have a positive economic benefit for the local community.

Some of these unusual and exotic travel experiences come at a price. Groups of 10 do pay up to US\$50,000 (\$76,940) for a 10-day journey riding saddle horses and fishing through Mongolia. Some, though, will appeal to all budgets and tastes.

“Surprisingly, sustainable can also mean comfortable or stylish,” says founder of Lonely Planet, Tony Wheeler. Places that offer sustainable tourism are crucial. “In many cases – from African wildlife to whales – it’s tourism that is the ultimate guarantor of a species’ survival.”

Useful Websites

- www.lonelyplanet.com
- www.workingabroad.com
- www.ecotourism.org



“Affluent people want enriching experiences that will make a difference.”
— Pam Danziger, president of Unity Marketing

LAOS Build Schools And Teach

Travel to remote villages in Laos where you can help build schools, teach English and deliver medical supplies. All ages are welcome.

WHY GO? “Guests get to see the standard attractions while gaining a powerful insight into the subtleties of Laotian life,” says Laos country director Jason Rolan. “Social barriers fall when people come together.”

WOW FACTOR Heal the world — join visiting doctors, dentists and teachers in providing villagers medical help and education.

COST About the same as a standard tour. For instance, an eight-day tour of Laos costs US\$1,877 (\$2,888) a person.

CONTACT Tel: +856 71 254 395
E-mail: laos@north-by-north-east.com

NEPAL Rebuild A Temple

Trek through the highest mountains in the world and help reconstruct a centuries-old monastery.

WHY GO? Once the religious centre of the Takhali people of Mustang, the area fell into economic hardship when the Chinese government closed the border to Tibet.

WOW FACTOR Their tours are accompanied by Sashi Dai Battachan, a world-renowned Buddhist artist who is part of the Takhali community.

COST US\$2,495 (\$3,840) for a 12-day tour.

CONTACT Tel: +1 415 563 7221

E-mail: info@crtp.net

www.chhairrogompa.org, www.crtp.net

SEYCHELLES Protect The Turtles

For utter indulgence gather a few friends (with big wallets) and head to the private eco-friendly Frégate Island in the Seychelles.

WHY GO? Owners have in place an eco-conservation program for turtle hatching — the Hawksbill turtle and Green turtle are both critically endangered and reportedly form an important part of the guests' experience during nesting time.

WOW FACTOR Stay in one of their 16 villas and spend dreamy days upon powdery white beaches.

COST From Euros 2,185 (\$4,360) per villa a night for two persons.

CONTACT Tel: +49 6102 50 1321

E-mail: reservations@fregate.com



AFRICA Save The Gorillas

Join a 14-day Mountain Gorilla tour that channels revenues to help save the gorillas. "There are just 650 mountain gorillas left in the wild, all located in the equatorial mountains of Uganda, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo," reports author of *Code Green*, Kerry Lorimer.

CONTACT www.visituganda.com,

www.discoveryinitiatives.co.uk

VENEZUELA Live with Pemon Indians

Peace Villages Foundation offers you the chance to stay with local families while you help in programmes such as reforestation, teaching English and medical care.

WHY GO? The La Gran Sabana area is the home of about 6,000 Pemon Indians, an ethnic minority. their land is slowly being taken over by mining companies.

WOW FACTOR Learn to speak Spanish, understand the culture, food and its people — in the beautiful landscape of Venezuela.

COST From about Bolívares 1.74 million (\$1,247) for a one-week stay and two meals a day.

CONTACT Tel: +58 414 245 6307

Email: mail@peacevillages.org

www.peacevillages.org

THAILAND Be An Environmentalist

Experience Southern Thailand on a community-based tour off the beaten track in the North Andaman. Partake in everything from mangrove restoration and teaching English to clearing beaches and light construction work.



WHY GO? "Students feel like they are actively contributing and learn not only about other cultures but also about themselves," says project leader, Kelly May.

WOW FACTOR This undiscovered part of Thailand will captivate those who wish to experience traditional communities and contribute to the conservation of this outstanding area. There are customised short-and long-term stays.

CONTACT Tel: +44 1799 521 950

E-mail: info@godifferently.com

http://www.godifferently.com/tsunami_volunteering.asp

Get The Look



Tiered silk tunic, price upon request, DKNY



Tchou Tchou metal charm belt with logo and semi precious stones, \$4,390, Chanel

Cape Cod woven straw tote bag with leather strap and lobster embroidery detail, \$450, Kate Spade



Plastic sandals with ankle strap, price upon request, Louis Vuitton



18-carat white gold water-resistant marine chronograph wrist watch with sapphire case back, \$43,500, Breguet