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**African Portfolio Named Best Adventure Travel Companies 2009 by
National Geographic ADVENTURE Magazine**

Local company recognized for excellence in custom-designed African safaris

[Greenwich, Conn., Feb. 11, 2009] African Portfolio has received one of the travel industry's highest honors by being designated one of the Best Adventure Travel Companies 2009 by the editors of [*National Geographic ADVENTURE* magazine](#). Greenwich-based African Portfolio received stellar marks for its custom-designed safaris for couples, families, and friends. Out of a possible 100 points the company scored a composite 91.5, aced client satisfaction with a perfect 100, and placed among the top eight safari operators in the world.

How did a boutique travel company out of Fairfield County get the attention of a global publication and join some of the most recognized names in the field? African Portfolio's owner, Diane Ebzery Lobel says, "It all has to do with years of experience, first-hand knowledge of the destinations and having a thorough understanding of what's important to our clientele."

Hands-On African Safari Experience

"Nearly everyone on the AP staff was born and raised in Africa, giving the company a leg up when planning customized safaris." So begins *National Geographic* in their introduction of African Portfolio as one of the Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth. Diane Lobel may have grown up in Greenwich, but she fell in love with Africa on her first visit in 1990. She immersed herself in the country, started a travel business there, and then transferred her expertise to serving Americans by opening an office back in her hometown. She now spends about half the year in Africa evaluating safari camps and lodges, finding new destinations, meeting with African Portfolio's extensive network of affiliates, and making sure every part of a safari tour meets her discerning standards. Her senior consultants Yvette De Vries and Susan Friedland, both natives of South Africa with extensive travel planning experience, each spend an additional five to seven weeks in Africa doing further research every year.

It is because of this in-depth knowledge that the company is able to tailor safari trips to each client's interests, time frame, and budget. For a honeymooning couple this could mean a customized version of the popular "Bush and Beach" trip that starts with intimate camps in wildlife parks and concludes at one of Africa's sparkling beaches. African Portfolio may select one set of lodges for the traditional or purist traveler, and an entirely different group of accommodations for those seeking *Out of Africa* luxury. "We consistently exceed our

client's expectations because meticulous planning goes into each and every tour," notes Diane Lobel. She adds, "Our significant hands-on experience is the reason we have successfully provided safari trips for more than 17 years. Not only do we know the lodges, guides, and game parks, we know when and where our clients are likely to see the seasonal birds, the newborn babies and the massive herds of the migration."

Meeting American Expectations

Unlike their European counterparts, with extended vacation time and for whom getting to Africa requires a relatively short flight in their own time zone, Americans tend to view safaris as a "once-in-a-lifetime trip." According to Diane Lobel, "Americans want more than a sight-seeing experience. They have a cultural curiosity and an environmental sensitivity, but the time and distance involved also means there is little opportunity for a 'do-over'."

What travelers often don't realize is that Africa is three times the size of the United States and is comprised of 52 different countries. Yvette De Vries says, "Planning is essential for a successful safari, particularly given the limited vacation time for most Americans." A poorly designed itinerary can mean spending more hours just getting to a camp rather than enjoying the magical moments that safaris are all about. Equally important is attention to pre-departure details. Each African Portfolio client is given a detailed packet of who, what, where, and when which is customized to their individual trip. African Portfolio's client packet is so thorough that it specifies which credit cards are accepted at each location, safari 'etiquette', tipping guidelines, as well as safety and medical precautions.

"We were delighted with our exceptionally high ratings in all categories, but we take particular pride in the 100 for client satisfaction. It shows that our efforts to educate and prepare our clients, as well as our expertise in delivering distinctive safari experiences -- all while keeping prices competitive -- has gained people's attention. And it explains our high rate of referrals and repeat clients." says Diane Lobel.

National Geographic's Adventure ratings are based on the premise that "a traveler's most important decision is not always where to go but who to go with." The magazine reached out to 248 guide services and their clients and administered a comprehensive 28-question survey. Scores were given from 1 to 100 in categories for education, sustainability, quality of service, spirit of adventure, and references. The editors acknowledge, "In a time when travel dollars are stretched, it's essential that an outfitter deliver the trip of a lifetime, the first time."

African Portfolio is located at 146 Sound Beach Avenue in Old Greenwich, CT. The travel company focuses exclusively on organizing custom-designed tours and safaris to Africa. Descriptions of African Portfolio safaris And tips for planning safaris can be found at www.OnSafari.com. For information about the company, please contact African Portfolio at 1-800-700-3677 or safariplanner@africanportfolio.com.