



BIOGRAPHY

Adrian Gardiner *Entrepreneur, Conservationist & Mentor*

Positions Held

- Chairman of the Mantis Group
- Chairman of the Wilderness Foundation Global
- Chairman of Stenden University, South Africa

Personal Awards

- Terra Nova Award Conservation Award 2001
- Prestige award from Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University 2002
- SATSA (South Africa Tourism Services Association) 2004
Recognition of the Development of Alicedale - an idea born of leadership, for sustainable development with integrity in the Tourism Industry
- The Herald Citizen of the year Award in the Environmental Conservation category 2005
- South Africa's Tourism Investment Award 2007
- CHN University Netherlands 2007
Degree Master in International Service Management (Honoris Causa)
- South African National Parks - Chief Executive Award 2007
- SAB Environmentalist of the year award 2008 (Nick Steele Memorial Award)
- Tourism Business Leadership Award 2009
African Hospitality Investment Award



Overview

Born in Zambia in 1943, Adrian Gardiner's passion for nature coupled with his strong entrepreneurial skill was forged from an early age. His love of wildlife came from his father who worked for a cattle ranching business and who took his son camping in the bush and hunting from an early age. His entrepreneurial skills were formed when he attended Falcon College in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. As one of the first 60 boys who were the initial intake of the new school, he was instrumental in helping to build the school from the ground up, from literally building their school classrooms to planting the sports fields. He soon understood that success was only possible with a good team, a clear vision and a focused passion.

From Zimbabwe he traveled to Cape Town to further his studies but, like many successful business people, he struggled at college taking 7 years to do a 3 year course. Academia was not for him. Whilst learning the ropes working for various Cape Town firms, it was evident that Adrian was not content working for other people and by the age of 29 he had moved from Cape Town to the Eastern Cape where he embarked on his first venture, to help build the Spar franchise in Port Elizabeth.

And so began a love affair with the city of Port Elizabeth (PE). As a rapidly developing location PE offered exciting new business opportunities which Adrian relished. For the next 20 years he embarked on a rollercoaster ride of a building companies in a multitude of industries from swimming pool

development to garage swing doors, pagers to crane hire. Today, as the home of his major business developments, Adrian's affection for PE continues and has caused him to keep his company HQ in the city rather than relocating to larger markets such as Johannesburg, Cape Town or London.



Having enjoyed commercial success, Adrian was able to 'return to the land' so to speak by developing a new venture into tourism in the early 1990's. He began with 2,000 hectares of eroded degraded and abused land, a small insignificant piece of valley bushveld, and from this he grew **Shamwari Game Reserve**, which is now 25 000 hectares in size and has seen the re-introduction of all the large game that once thrived in the Eastern Cape. He was the first person to put the Eastern Cape on the tourist map and today the area is a booming tourist destination and home to countless other private game reserves. Shamwari has since become a blueprint internationally for successful sustainable conservation tourism and its development was instrumental in forming the next phase in Adrian's life.

On seeing the success of Shamwari, Adrian was able to replicate the model a few years later, by creating **Sanbona Wildlife Reserve** in the Western Cape (54 000 hectares). With two wildlife reserves flourishing, Adrian then founded the parent company **Mantis** in 2000. The name Mantis relates to the San people who revere the praying Mantis and protect it as the most important animal in their eco system as '*if you look after the little things, the big things take care of themselves*'. Rather than only securing the inbound business within his game reserves, Adrian recognised the opportunity in providing a consistent high quality tourism experience from start to finish where properties could join forces under one group, thus providing a one stop shop for international visitors wishing to travel from West to East along the Garden Route.

The Mantis Group, whilst maintaining its origins in South Africa, then developed their model worldwide understanding that consumers could use Mantis as a mark of quality, consistency and character with their portfolio of 72 properties worldwide. Today the Group comprises the finest examples of privately owned boutique hotels, game reserves and eco experiences. Each property is unique and seeks to bring to life the real character and spirit of each location in which they are situated.

As the company has grown, Adrian's ambitions for Mantis have also grown in two distinct directions; developing Mantis' global footprint of properties worldwide and using the lessons learnt when developing Shamwari to educate, support and develop major conservation tourism projects worldwide. In this vein, Adrian has returned to his homeland of Zimbabwe and is now helping to regenerate the long established Stanley & Livingstone reserve near Victoria Falls and is supporting the IAPF (International Anti-Poaching Foundation) who have a base on the reserve to grow. He is also consulting on wildlife regeneration in Nigeria. Adrian sees this as a tangible way of giving something back to nature and creating a positive legacy where communities can see the financial benefits in conserving their environment and wildlife.

Adrian has been married to his wife Shirleyanne for 46 years, they have 3 children, Paul, Murray and Angela all of whom have adopted their father's entrepreneurial ways and run their own businesses. Paul is the Marketing Director of the Mantis Group.

Key Dates

- Born 1943
- Falcon College in Bulawayo
- 1962 - 1969 UCT completed BCom
- 1969 Worked at Golden Arrow Bus company moved from Accounts to Assistant Marketing Manager to Assistant to GM
- 1969/1970 moved to Port Elizabeth and helped set up Spar franchise
- 1970 Set up own companies spring door business, '*Easy Doors*' then bleeper business '*Pageboy*',
- 1972/3 KFC started franchise in Port Elizabeth
- 1974 Launched '*Penguin Pools*'
- 1976 Set up plant hire business, '*Castle Crane hire*' and joined up with Johannesburg company
- 1979 Oil crisis and inflation lead to economic crisis
- 1980 Started transport and commercial swimming pool business having learnt the trade in the USA. Joint venture with Gary Rhodes who runs transport and crane hire businesses
- 1985 Thoroughbred stud farm - Roodefontein in Plettenberg Bay
- 1989 Bought first plot of land on what is now Shamwari
- 1992 Shamwari opened
- 2000 Launched parent company Mantis



FAQ's with Adrian Gardiner:

Why did you sell Shamwari Game Reserve?

"Born in Zambia, schooled in Zimbabwe and educated in Cape Town I have been acutely aware that we have never addressed the land issues in Africa since colonial times. Therefore following the introduction of direct flights from the UAE by Emirates (as instigated by FIFA in the wake of the World Cup) I saw an opportunity to introduce the might of Dubai to help protect our African soil. Therefore I jumped at chance to work with Dubai World to help use their business clout to make more of an impact. However, due to the economic downturn it became difficult to work with Dubai so it felt like the correct time to sell our share in the Shamwari with the aim of moving our focus to other projects around the globe. In selling Shamwari to Dubai World I also knew that as they are very proud people, they would not do anything rash with the business, rather continue to protect it for the future. "

Do you have regrets about selling Shamwari?

"No, I do not have any regrets. I have kept my private home on Shamwari with traversing rites. I read a recent interesting article which said that most entrepreneurs don't have regrets and I definitely fall into that category. I am happy to turn the page and look to the future. I am confident that I have helped to make a significant contribution to the Tourism industry in the Eastern Cape and indeed in South Africa and I feel proud of the legacy I am leaving behind. I am however now keen to move on and focus on contributing via my work with AWF and The Wilderness Foundation. "

What is the legacy you are keen to leave behind?

"I am passionate about leaving a legacy in Port Elizabeth in terms of the infrastructure of the town and its product offerings in the hope that I have helped to put Port Elizabeth on the global map. However I am also passionate about leaving a lasting legacy in terms of my efforts to help with the conservation of African habitats and wildlife and also education. Education is key to the future of our country be it education in the hospitality industry or relating to our environment. It is the most empowering legacy I can look to leave behind. "

What do you see as the biggest hurdles in the tourism industry today?

"Looking specifically at Africa, I feel the greatest hurdles are with the Airlines, it is the taxes that consumers are being charged which is the problem and which adds hugely to the cost of a visit to Africa. In South Africa, since the World Cup, there has been an oversupply of hotels which is not sustainable on the medium term. "

What is your vision for the next five years?

"Aside from improving my handicap in golf! I am keen for Mantis to achieve what we are doing right, we are not ahead of the pack yet and are still exploring. The traditional way of doing business is changing in terms of way in which we connect with our customers, in this vain we need to be closer to our markets and be much closer to consumers. "

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**About Mantis:**

Unearthing the Exceptional

Privately Owned Boutique Hotels and Eco Escapes Around the World

Mantis is a family run, private collection of award winning, privately owned, five star properties located around the World. Divided into five distinct groups, its specialist areas include Boutique Hotels, Game Reserves, Eco Lodges, Ski Lodges and Chalets and Yachts. All of the properties represent the finest example of its kind and celebrate the culture, gastronomy, architecture and nature of the locations in which they are found to offer guests a truly authentic experience.

Founded by Adrian Gardiner in 2000, Mantis is committed to the spirit of conservation and restoration, and each property is sensitive to its surroundings in respect of the building, environment and local community. Adrian Gardiner began his journey with the purchase of an insignificant, eroded piece of land measuring a mere 2,000 hectares in 1992. He developed this land into Shamwari Game Reserve in South Africa, which now measures 25,000 hectares in size and has seen the re-introduction of all the game that once roamed the wilds of the Eastern Cape 200 years ago. Today Mantis continues to mentor many other reserves and national parks all around the world with their re-wilding strategies, planning and ultimately, development. The group also works with several partners in its commitment to this pledge including Born Free, the Wilderness Foundation and Tusk.

The diverse portfolio of handpicked properties link up to create journeys, which offer guests the ultimate life experience and the opportunity to experience the essence of the location. Guests can enjoy unique river-based game viewing in Zambia staying at riverside lodges and aboard luxury riverboat, the Zambezi Queen; explore the diverse landscapes of South America with explora Atacama, explora Patagonia and explora Rapa Nui; or experience the natural wonder of the Northern Lights at the ICEHOTEL and the outstanding design of Treehotel in Sweden.

Whilst every property is unique, being part of the collection ensures that the quality of the facilities, service and overall experience is consistently 5 star and guests can always expect personal, friendly service. Mantis ensures this consistency through supporting the training of industry professionals by investing both at university level through the Mantis Education division and within the group itself.

The entrepreneurial spirit of the family underpins that of the group allowing them to be dynamic in the growth of the portfolio, responding quickly to consumer demand. The family approach is reflected in the choice of family owned and run properties in the portfolio and the experience that guests have there as a valued guest, rather than just another number.

Mantis offers member properties the ideal sales, marketing and management solution for their boutique business with expert teams of sales, marketing and PR professionals located in the UK, USA and South Africa to ensure successful growth and drive long term brand development. Mantis has 12 years of established property management experience worldwide and has consulted on and managed many development projects, most notably Delaire Graff Estate in South Africa, the Plantation Club in the Seychelles and Ellenborough Park Hotel in the United Kingdom.

For more information visit: www.mantiscollection.com