

Passing the Torch: Leadership Transitions at Sense of Africa, South Africa



We thank Martin for his unbelievable contribution and wish him a joyful new chapter ahead.

After an extraordinary 27 years of dedication and leadership, our Chief Operating Officer of Sense of Africa, South Africa, Martin Botha, will be retiring on 1 September 2025.

Martin's journey with Sense of Africa has been nothing short of remarkable. Over nearly three decades, he has:

- Steered the company through immense growth and transformation,
- Led with vision and resilience during challenging times, including the COVID-19 pandemic, and
- Built a strong, passionate team that continues to drive our success today.

"Martin Botha has been the backbone of Sense of Africa, South Africa, for 27 years. His leadership, loyalty, and commitment to excellence have shaped the business into what it is today. He has inspired teams, nurtured talent, and navigated some of the most challenging periods in our industry with calm confidence. While we will miss his steady presence, we wish him nothing but happiness and new adventures as he embarks on a well-deserved retirement."

~ Martin Wiest,
CEO of Tourvest Destination Management

My 27 year Tourvest and tourism career began fortuitously at Welcome Tours and Safaris in 1998. My formal education at UCT pigeonholed me as FD for a few years but thankfully Martin Wiest and Peta Panos saw potential in me and allowed me to flee the coop and explore the whole gamut of roles, thrills and spills in a DMC.

I went from IS manager to MD Welcome Tourism Services, then on to COO TIO followed by COO Sense of Africa, SA. I thank my lucky stars that I landed up in tourism, working for a great company, in a country that is any traveller's dream destination and to have always been surrounded and supported by friends and colleagues who constitute our teams of travel professionals. The new arena of travel distributors is complex and daunting and in my view now best left to the young and the brave!

As we look to the future, we are proud to announce that Suzanne Benadie will take on the role of Managing Executive of Sense of Africa, South Africa, effective 1 September 2025.

Suzanne brings deep experience, strong industry knowledge, and a passion for people and product to this role. With our strong internal skills pool, we are confident that Suzanne will lead the business into an exciting new era. Please join us in congratulating Suzanne and wishing her every success as she steps into this leadership position.

With over 35 years in tourism, I've worked across guiding, tour directing, group operations, and even founded my own niche DMC. Joining Tourvest in 2011, I progressed from Adhoc Groups at Welcome Tourism Services to Sales & Marketing Director at Your Africa, later overseeing business development, contracting, and key source markets for Tourvest DMC.

Since 2020, I've driven the growth and recovery of Sense of Africa, South Africa—retaining clients, developing new markets, and building a strong team. I am honoured to now lead as Managing Executive, guiding our team into an exciting and complex future.



**Welcoming
Suzanne Benadie
as Managing Executive**

We are also thrilled to announce that Masa Yamawaki, currently Market Manager for Australia, New Zealand, Asia & North America, will step into the role of General Manager Sales for Sense of Africa, South Africa.

Masa's international market expertise, strong client relationships, and passion for delivering exceptional service makes him the perfect fit to lead our sales efforts and drive future growth.

I began my tourism career in 2006 and quickly discovered a passion for connecting international travellers with the people, culture, and experiences of South Africa. Over the years, I've gained extensive experience across consulting, contracting, and sales, building strong industry relationships along the way.

Since joining Tourvest Destination Management in 2016 under the Your Africa brand, I've worked across diverse international markets, including Asia, Australia, New Zealand, the Nordics, and North America. This exposure has given me valuable insights into global travel trends and client expectations.

I'm passionate about creating meaningful travel experiences that showcase Southern Africa as a world-class destination and drive growth for our business.



**Masa Yamawaki – New
General Manager Sales**