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Hayley BAILLIE

WINNER: LIFESTYLE

When Hayley Baillie was a child, there were no ballet lessons or tap-dance classes. “We’d always be camping or bushwalking in the Blue Mountains,” she recalls. “I just wanted to be dancing, not go up the Canning Stock Route [in WA].” But as the daughter of Australian entrepreneur Dick Smith, life was a little less ordinary. “Friends would be going to the Gold Coast for school holidays and we’d be going helicopter camping across the Nullarbor or going to the Arctic Circle and sleeping in caribou-skin tents. I look back now and think I had such amazing opportunities as a child.”

It also fostered an adventurous spirit that has resulted in a successful career as a luxury travel entrepreneur and hotelier. When she was in her twenties, Baillie worked under the tutelage of shark experts and marine documentary filmmakers Ron and Valerie Taylor. “I was at sea for up to nine months of the year and mostly in the tropical regions of the world,” says Baillie, now 40. “As the years went on, I wanted to broaden my skill set and spent a lot of time working as part of an expedition through Antarctica and the Arctic.” It was while working as an experience coordinator that Baillie discovered the power of good customer service. “It’s similar to what we do now in our hotels—we’re fully inclusive and on first-name basis with the guests.”

This model has been the cornerstone of Baillie Lodges. Founded in 2003 with her husband, James, the portfolio of luxurious

destination resorts include Lord Howe Island’s Capella Lodge and Kangaroo Island’s Southern Ocean Lodge (which opened in 2008) and eschews flamboyance in favour of restrained, sophisticated accommodation. Located in stunning environments, the lodges boast a perfect mix of nature and nurture. “At Southern Ocean Lodge, we have a cellar chock full of South Australian wine. You help yourself so you feel like it’s your own personal lodge.”

Although Baillie is based on Sydney’s Northern Beaches with James and their



I have great memories of being at Resolute Bay [in Canada] and telling John Laws that my dad had just gotten to the North Pole.”

four sons, she and her husband alternate visits between all of the properties every six weeks. And she still gets a thrill every time. “I love watching the guests’ faces as they walk into the lodge for the first time and get a glimpse of the ocean,” she says. “Literally, their jaws drop.”

She’s hoping for more of the same in 2014, when she and James open Baillies Sydney, a premium, 10-suite hotel in The Rocks. “One of the biggest things is to stick to your vision—staying true to yourself and persevering is so important.” That, and advice picked up from her famous father. “He told me communication is key. Always ask for advice and travel through life constantly inspired.”

BAILLIE’S MOST MEMORABLE TRIPS

Antarctica “I spent three seasons there working on a Russian icebreaker and a Russian research ship. Antarctica is a must-go destination; words can’t describe the magnitude of its beauty. My dream is to take my children there.”

West Papua “It’s so close to Australia but we were going to villages where babies had never seen a white person before. They’re happy, beautiful people in a different world. We visited Cenderawasih Bay aboard the ship True North and swam with the whale sharks. They come in to be fed under the fishing boats and stay there for hours. The marine ecology and the snorkelling is something else, too.”

Yemen “It was the culture that did it for me, along with the heat and intense desert scope of it all. I found it fascinating and I loved the food, the henna, the colour, the light and the fact that it was so untouched. Yemen really appealed to my sense of discovery.” —CHRIS URANKAR

Women of Style



Zimmermann top.
Flannel pants, Sylvie Markovina
necklace; at kirrilyjohnston.
com. Longines watch, Baillie's
own earrings, ring and heels.
Hair: Kimberley Forbes.
Make-up: Claire Thomson.