

Intrepid Travel guide wins GOLD!

By Intrepid Travel

Dated: Oct 27, 2008

Top award goes to one of Intrepid Travel's Egyptian guides

Enjoy a real life travel experience in Egypt with Intrepid Travel and you could be travelling with the gold winner in Wanderlust Magazine's Paul Morrison Guides Award, announced in London on Friday, 3 October.

Esam Abd El Salam, a tour leader with Intrepid Travel in Egypt, won gold from a record number of entries, beating 170 guides from around the world to take out the top award. The awards were set-up to recognise the difference that a great guide can make to travel experiences and are nominated by readers of Wanderlust. Esam celebrated his win in London, along with former passengers, including a family who travelled from Sweden to cheer him on.

Best-selling author, Bill Bryson, led the judging panel and said of Esam's win, "The main qualities we were looking for were knowledge, communication and empathy. It became clear that Esam has the respect and admiration of his peers – his fellow guides, as well as his clients. He has touched and, in some cases, changed many people's lives."

The judges cited Esam's care to encourage interaction with the local community and the insight he provides into the politics, religion and everyday life of Egypt among the key reasons for his win. They were also impressed with his excellent communication skills (he speaks four languages - French, English, German and his native Arabic).

One reader who nominated Esam commented, "My most vivid memory of Esam was him speaking to a local child in sign language; he derives happiness from enriching the lives of others."

During his tours for Intrepid Travel, Esam takes his groups to visit local communities. This not only allows both the travellers and the locals to learn about new cultures, it also means any souvenirs bought by tourists while they're there directly benefit the people.

Esam understands the vital role that tourism can play in injecting income into his country. He was born in the northern part of the Delta in Egypt and began work at the age of seven, helping his father run the family's shop. In fact, Esam's various jobs within the travel industry have meant he has been able to support his studies through university.

In addition to cash awards and equipment, Esam wins a bursary of £5,000, which he intends to spend on furthering his own knowledge, as well as giving children in his local community the opportunity of an education.

Some trips Esam's leads are:

Off-beat Cairo - 1 day ex Cairo. Leave the pharaohs to the tourists and take in Cairo's more unusual and rarely visited attractions. Gaze over the city from the Citadel built by Saladin and explore the ancient markets and mosques of Islamic Cairo. Discover astonishing recycling projects in the district known as Garbage City, enter the peaceful haven of the Coptic Christian quarter and enjoy a local meal at a famous cafe. <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/trips/EAK/USPR>

Egypt Adventure - 8 days ex Cairo. Revel in a taste of Egypt's history, beauty and colour on this short but action-packed trip along the longest river in the world. Cruise the Nile on a felucca, discover the largest and most impressive Pharaonic temples, chat with interesting locals and live it up a little in this country of deserts, bazaars, monuments and good old-fashioned adventures. <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/trips/ESB/USPR>

For more information on Intrepid Travel and their Egypt Adventure Travel visit: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/USPR>

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With over 19 years of experience, Intrepid Travel is one of the world's leading small group adventure tour operators. Intrepid offers over 450 itineraries in more than 90 destinations worldwide. Intrepid trips are designed to go off the beaten track, meet the locals and travel in an unconventional way, joining locals on their transport, in their markets and even in their homes.

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