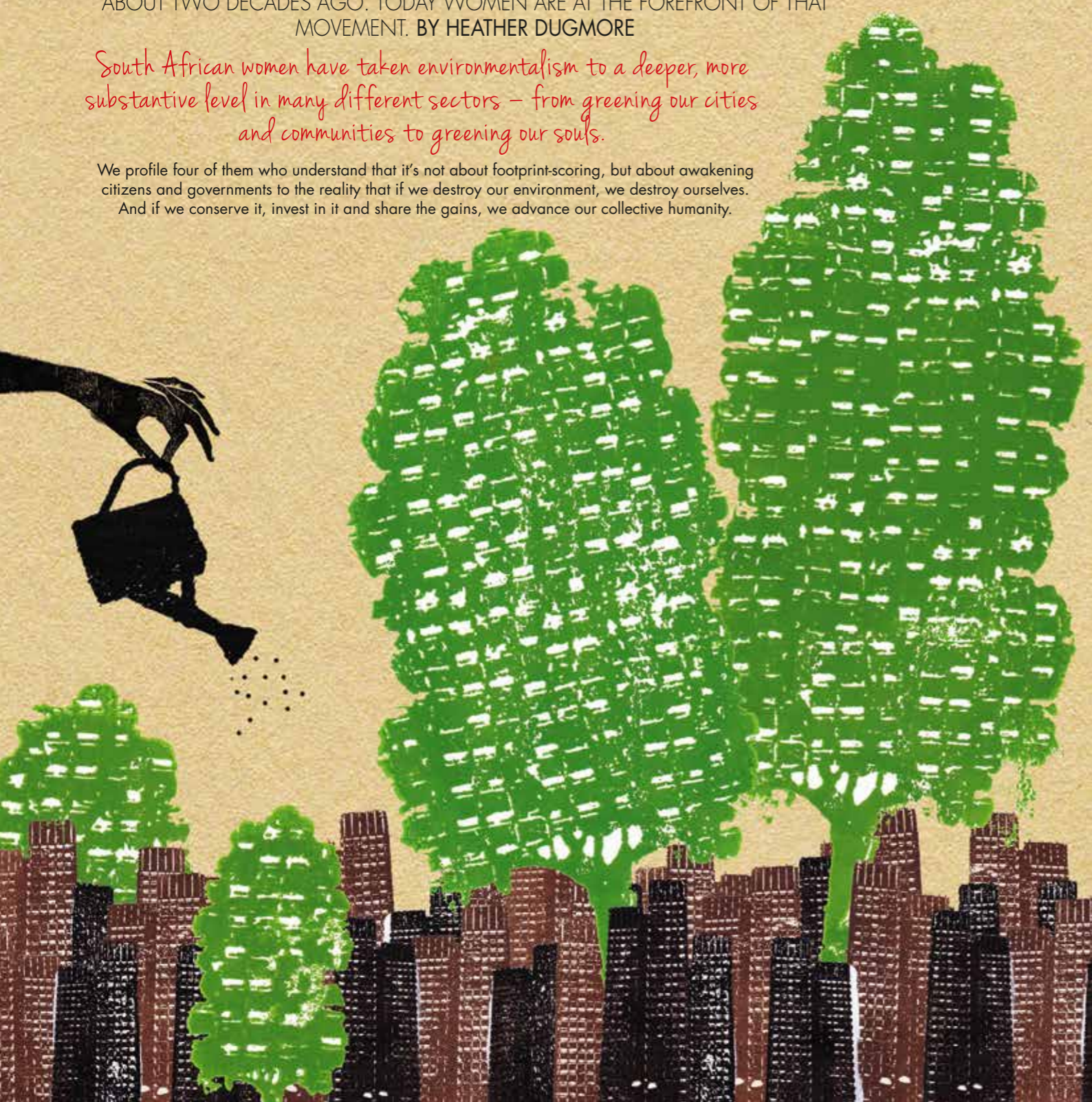


# THE MEANING OF *Green*

TAKING STEPS TO REVERSE THE PROCESS OF CLIMATE CHANGE REALLY BEGAN ABOUT TWO DECADES AGO. TODAY WOMEN ARE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THAT MOVEMENT. BY HEATHER DUGMORE

*South African women have taken environmentalism to a deeper, more substantive level in many different sectors – from greening our cities and communities to greening our souls.*

We profile four of them who understand that it's not about footprint-scoring, but about awakening citizens and governments to the reality that if we destroy our environment, we destroy ourselves. And if we conserve it, invest in it and share the gains, we advance our collective humanity.



Rose Jordaan

**VINEYARD CUSTODIAN**

My first career as an architect in Johannesburg prepared me for my current career as the custodian of our vineyard, Bartinney, on the Helshoogte Pass in the Western Cape's Stellenbosch region, which we opened in 2006. Conceptualising a building within its context and with its unique constraints has much in common with understanding a vineyard situated in its unique terroir, with its final expression a bottle of wine. There's something extraordinary about being involved in such an ancient art and I'm committed to leading a simple life of balance, based on strong social and environmental principles and a good dose of strategic hard work.

Bartinney came about when my husband Michael and I repurchased the family estate which had been sold nine years previously. We then spent two years clearing all the alien trees, reducing our carbon footprint by planting indigenous ones, installing solar energy to significantly reduce our electricity usage, managing our water better and employing people, rather than mechanising their tasks. I also started a fynbos nursery 10 years ago to replant the slopes on Bartinney where we'd cleared the alien vegetation. It was essential to completely re-evaluate the farming methods used for many years on Bartinney, where pesticides and herbicides had decimated the bird, insect and wildlife populations. We stopped all this and species like leopards, baboons and porcupines that were once considered adverse for farming now enhance our environment. The quality of our vineyards has also improved, as the soil and growing environment have recovered. We've achieved carbon-neutral status and have been awarded WWF Conservation Champion status.

At Bartinney, environmental and social sustainability is the holistic philosophy by which our entire team lives and manages the estate.

Our winemaker, Ronell Wiid, is a qualified geologist, which is an ideal grounding for a winemaker, as it all starts with the soil. In 1999, she became the first woman to be named the Diners Club Winemaker of the Year.

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**DR JEUNESSE PARK, ENVIRONMENTAL PIONEER, SOCIAL JUSTICE ACTIVIST AND RECIPIENT OF A 2016 HONORARY DOCTORATE FROM RHODES UNIVERSITY**  
 In 1990 I started Food & Trees for Africa from my garage in Johannesburg. My goal was to plant trees and food gardens in townships and help improve the lives of fellow South Africans where I could.

I'd fill my car with saplings and vegetable seed and, with my young children in tow, head into Gauteng's townships and plant with community members who were increasingly interested in greener environments and learning about how this improved their quality of life.



It's deeply gratifying to have been part of the awakening of environmental and climate change awareness on this subcontinent.

Over the past 26 years, Food & Trees for Africa has facilitated thousands of food gardens and planted well over four million indigenous trees and fruit trees throughout the country, as well as funding environmental programmes and school education workshops for millions of pupils, changing lives and landscapes.

My time at the organisation ended in 2014. That same year, I facilitated former American Vice-President and Nobel Laureate Al Gore's training of 700 new African Climate Leaders in SA and started his Climate Reality Project on the continent. Today the world better understands the reality of climate change, since Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* in 2006 catalysed it. Regrettably, there still isn't sufficient profound climate action.

I've now turned my attention to helping develop a global environmental programme together with Local Governments for Sustainability (ICLEI), a network of over 1 000 cities, towns and metropolises worldwide committed to building a sustainable future.

The initiative will be launched later this year. Jo'burg, Durban and Cape Town are part of it and will be working towards creating healthier and more resilient cities where communities can live, work and develop a better life. To this end, we'll be working with city leaders and decision-makers, businesses and communities to inform, share best practices and promote climate and environmentally sound decisions.



Cindy Maspero

**SPIRIT OF THE WILD (SOTW) PROGRAMME FACILITATOR**

The SOTW that we offer on Bergplaas – a 5 000ha nature reserve in the Karoo – is a wildlife experience that deeply reconnects participants from diverse backgrounds with themselves and the natural environment. This primary connection is the lifeline of our shared humanity.


Geographically, we neighbour the iconic Compassberg Mountain in the Nieu-Bethesda/Graaff-Reinet region, renowned for its vast, harsh beauty and incredible sense of space. Bergplaas has a population of approximately 900 large mammals, several small carnivores and over 133 bird species.

The SOTW Programme is endorsed by the Field Guide Association of Southern Africa as a Specialist Training Provider and participants range from young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in SA to young people from the South African government’s job creation initiatives in the conservation sector, MBA students from Europe and global business leaders. Our European partners help fund financially disadvantaged participants.

We also offer a springboard from which young people can confidently enter the conservation sector, equipped with a greater understanding of wildlife and their role in the natural environment. We also offer a number of annual internships for nature conservation students to do their experiential training here.

The SOTW Programme evolved after the owner of Bergplaas, Irene van Lippe-Biesterfeld, Princess of the Netherlands, spent extended time alone here. From that, she conceived the programme, which I’ve co-facilitated with my husband, Wayne, since 2007. Many have said that time spent here is life-changing and it’s inspiring to be a part of that and contribute to the growth of SA’s young conservationists.

**Ntombozuko Ngzumza, SOTW participant from the Wilderness Foundation’s Umzi Wethu Conservation Academy**, attests to the life-changing impact of the programme. “It taught me to be grounded and humble. I learnt to let nature heal me from the inside. I walked around Bergplaas not fully loving and appreciating myself for who I am, but now I realise that there’s much more to me than I thought.”



Rebecca Phiyega

**MARKETING MANAGER: NEDBANK GREEN AFFINITY**

In 1990, 20 years before sustainability became the key global focus of our time, Nedbank recognised the signs of a looming natural resource crisis. The bank realised the necessity of putting corporate clout and capital behind conservation in our country and launched the partnership with WWF-SA to create the WWF Nedbank Green Trust.

With the support of our Green Affinity clients, Nedbank has donated over R185 million to the WWF Nedbank Green Trust over the past 26 years.

This money has been used to fund more than 200 conservation projects, ranging from early ones such as promoting solar cookers and conserving Kalahari lions to the current initiatives focusing on climate change, renewable energy, water conservation, rhino conservation, food security and environmental leadership.

Our approach is that conservation needs to be inclusive, relevant and beneficial for all South Africans. What makes me additionally proud is the number of women who’ve led the green movement in so many different fields during those 26 years.

One of our current projects is called “People and the Coast”, where recreational fishers and divers are engaged as citizen scientists to record and report on SA’s marine species. This data significantly informs marine conservation policy and strategy, and the investment



in the project over three years has unlocked the support of 800 000 fishers and divers across the country.

Developing environmental leaders for SA is another area in which we’ve invested through the WWF-SA Graduate Development Programme. We’ve funded 30 Master’s students and graduates from universities throughout the country to complete an 18-month internship in conservation- and sustainability-focused organisations. The interns are from a wide range of disciplines, including environmental science, agriculture, conservation biology, water science, marine science, sustainable development, law, commerce and economics. 🌍