

# Winners of AITO's prestigious 2023/24 Travel Writer of the Year Awards announced

16 October 2024

AITO, the Specialist Travel Association ([www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com)), is delighted to confirm the winners of its 2023/24 Travel Writer of the Year awards, which were announced at the annual AITO Meets the Media event at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel, South Kensington, last night, Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> October.

The awards were split into five different categories, and judges assessed each article according to four criteria, across two rounds of judging, seeking copy that was not only **inspirational, informative and interesting**, but that was also **well-written**.

The five Travel Writer of the Year awards – and their winning entries – are:

## 1. AITO Travel Writer of the Year – Over 1,500 words

The prestigious **AITO Travel Writer of the Year (TWOTY) Over 1,500 words Award** was presented to **Ellie Fazan** for *Single, Pregnant and Travelling*, a piece about Sri Lanka, for **Adventure.com**. The judges commented that Ellie's article was *"A brilliant, emotional and original article. Very refreshing. This is an article that warms the soul."*

In **second place**, for his article, *Living with nature in Fiji*, in **Wanderlust**, was **Mark Stratton**.

In **third place** was **Sarah Gillespie** for her piece *The beautiful island*, about Taiwan, published in **JRNY**.

## 2. AITO Travel Writer of the Year – Under 1,500 words

In **first place**, for her article *The best way to see America's ultimate wilderness is by train*, for **The Telegraph**, was **Jacqui Agate**. The judges said it was *"Very well-written. Captures the landscape and makes you want to go there."*

In **second place** was **Jessica Vincent**, whose piece, *The new Sri Lankan hiking trail that leads to the heart of the hill country*, was published in **National Geographic Traveller**.

In **third place** was **Holly Budge** for her article, *World-female ranger interviews: five women you need to know* for **Adventure.com**.

## 3. AITO Young Travel Writer of the Year

This award celebrates travel writing talent in the under-30s.

In **first place** was **Leyla Rose** for her article *Have Hong Kong's iconic Dai Pai Dong seen their last supper?*, for **Adventure.com**, which was described by the judging panel as *"Evocative, informed, insightful. A well-researched piece (with) brilliant descriptions of the local cuisine, and the author's sensory experience."*

In **second place** was **Erica Rich**, with her article, *Island of opportunity*, about Sri Lanka, published in **Aspire**.

In **third place**, for her article titled *A slow boat through the Cyclades*, was **Alice Barnes-Brown**, published in **JRNY**.

## 4. AITO Travel Trade Writer of the Year

This award recognises the many and varied challenges faced by travel trade writers – from a wide mix of complex travel industry issues, to briefing agents on how best to sell the huge and varied range of travel experiences available.

In **first place** was **Rashmi Narayan** for her piece, *I found coastal bliss on the west coast of America in TTG*, about which one of the judges said: **“This painted a picture of a place I had never thought of visiting and now I want to experience!”**

In **second place** was **Erica Rich** for her piece on Peru, titled *Nature’s gift*, which was featured in **Aspire**.

In **third place** was **Laura French**, for her piece, *Rest and regenerate*, based on a trip to Thailand, in **Aspire**.

## **5. AITO Travel Blogger of the Year**

This category recognises the considerable – and ever-expanding - influence of travel bloggers and their role within the travel writing community.

In **first place**, was **Katie MacLeod** for her piece *The perfect autumn weekend in Lisbon* for **Stories my suitcase could tell**. One of the judges commented: **“[This piece] paints a picture so evocative that I nearly booked myself a flight back to Lisbon after finishing the article.”**

In **second place** was *What you need to know about the Ravenna mosaics in Italy*, by **Abigail King**, for **Inside the Travel Lab**.

In **third place**, for her piece *Is Graz worth visiting? The truth about Austria’s second city*, is another entry from **Abigail King** for **Inside the Travel Lab**.

**Says Martyn Sumners, Executive Director of AITO:** “This year, **AITO’s 27<sup>th</sup> Travel Writer of the Year Awards**, saw a record number of entries across the five categories, and I am hugely grateful to those who kindly gave their time to review both the first-round articles for judging and also to those who were involved in the second-round judging.

“As ever, we had some excellent entries, and would like to share our congratulations with all the extremely worthy winners.

“We’d also like to thank all our great many judges for reading, and evaluating, so many examples of very good travel writing. Special thanks are also due to Gran Canaria and to Christopher Kirker, who very kindly sponsored the awards.”

For further information on AITO’s Travel Writer of the Year Awards, visit [www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com).

## **Ends**

**Press:** For further information on AITO, please see [www.aito.com](http://www.aito.com) or contact Travel PR on 020 8891 4440. Alternatively, email Gemma Minto ([g.minto@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:g.minto@travelpr.co.uk)) or Sue Ockwell ([s.ockwell@travelpr.co.uk](mailto:s.ockwell@travelpr.co.uk)).

**Notes to editors:** For the full 2023/24 shortlist, see [here](#).