

Rescue Apes Take To The Skies In Cover Story

Conservation photographer Joe Zammit-Lucia's images feature in the cover story of the August edition of Southwest Airlines' Spirit Magazine.

Rescued Apes

Founded by Patti Ragan, the Center for Great Apes provides a shelter for orangutans and chimpanzees most of whom come from the entertainment industry after they have been discarded because they have grown too big and strong and are no longer 'cute' - a requirement for them to appear in movies or commercials.

Joe Zammit-Lucia visited the center and created portraits of the rescued apes for the I AM portfolio of images. Besides the cover image, portraits of the animals appear in the magazine as a gallery entitled "Great Apes".

The gallery follows "Back To Nurture" an article on the work of Patti Ragan and her staff at the Center for Great Apes. Founded in 1993 in Miami, the Center moved to central Florida in 1997 and now cares for over 40 apes providing them with care and attention and a comfortable lifestyle.

"It is hard to imagine that these and many other animals are used for entertainment for a short period of their lives and then discarded", said Joe Zammit-Lucia. "What I was trying to capture in my images was the fact that these are individuals with different personalities and emotions. They are creatures with feelings, not products that we should be using to market a health drink and then discarding when they become inconvenient."

Donated Fees

The photographer's fees for use of the images in Spirit Magazine will be donated to the Center. The article has also already resulted in sales of fine art photographic prints of the ape portraits. All proceeds will also be donated to the Center for Great Apes.

About The Center

The Center for Great Apes in Wauchula, FL has annual expenses of \$800,000 excluding capital expenditures. Each ape costs \$14,000 to \$15,000 to maintain. The Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and all donations are tax deductible.

Joe Zammit-Lucia is a photographic artist whose work focuses on Heritage, Conservation and the Environment.

He is currently working with environmental organizations on multiple projects around the world.