

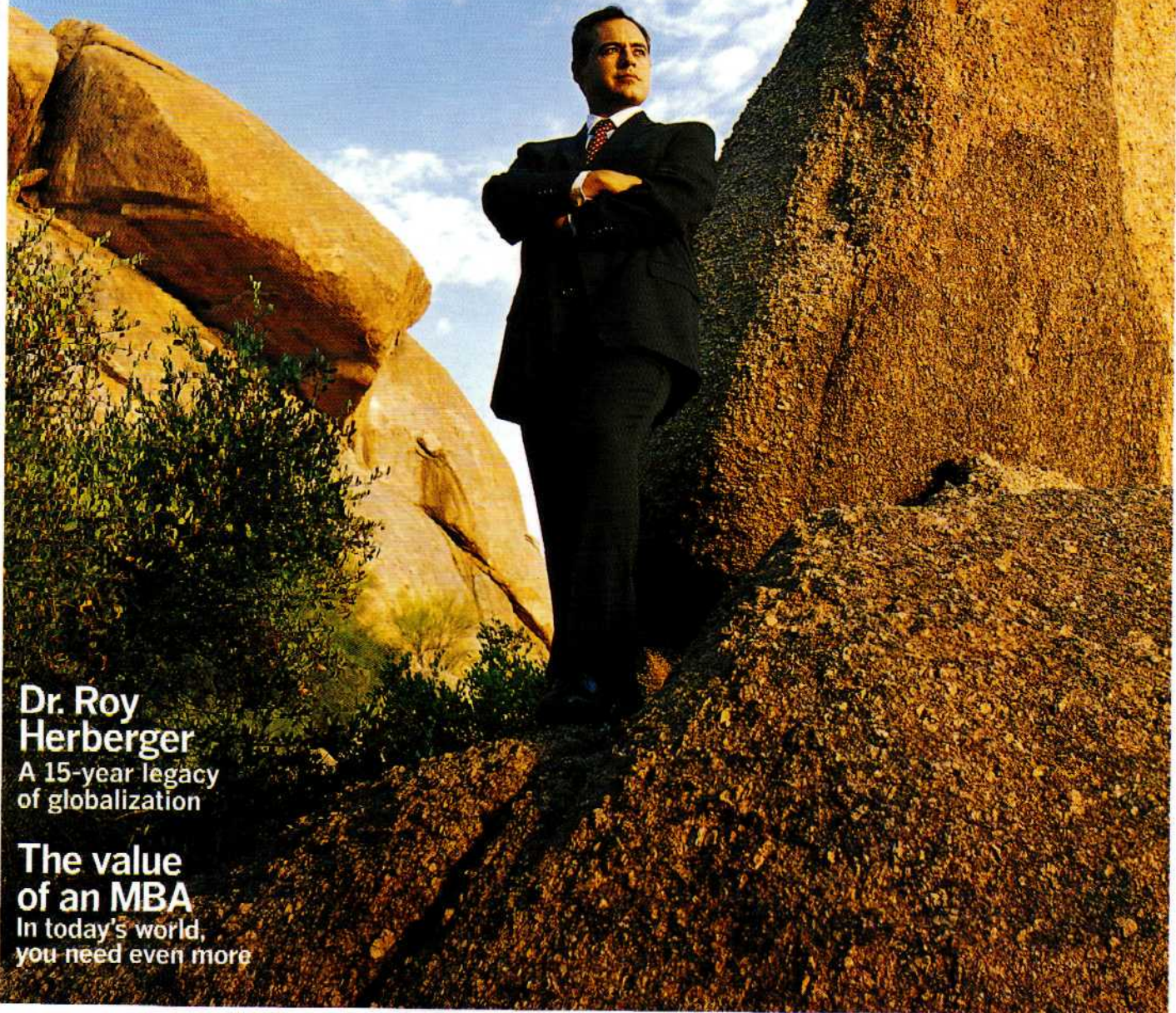
Fall 2004

# thunderbird

Magazine

## Rock solid

Angel Cabrera  
takes over the reins  
at Thunderbird



## Dr. Roy Herberger

A 15-year legacy  
of globalization

## The value of an MBA

In today's world,  
you need even more

# DOING IT THEIR OWN WAY

**Four Thunderbird women  
follow their personal passions  
to entrepreneurial success**

By Terrie LoCicero

“there weren’t any tour operators focusing on the Spanish-speaking market. So we put together a business plan.”

Namibia, which broke away from South Africa in 1990, is a large country with just 1.8 million people. An arid land, much of it is uninhabitable, but it offers a variety of climates and a rich animal life.

Dennewill and Cuesta traveled throughout the country and took classes on Namibian ecotourism, flora and fauna. In late 2002, they started Oipuka, which means “animals” in Oshiwambo, a Namibian language. The company (oipuka.com) offers individualized guided and fly-in trips, as well as travel planning for self-guided tours. Depending upon the region, guests can see lions, leopards, rhinos, elephants, cheetahs, giraffes, buffalos, antelopes, hyenas, hippos, crocodiles and a large population of birdlife.

Tour guests travel in a VW Caravelle Syncro, raised high to provide better game viewing. “Self-drive” guests use single- or double-cab 4x4s. Groups stay in bungalows and tent

camps. The partners do the marketing and business development and lead tours. In 2003, their first full year in business, they ran about 20 tours, with 90 percent of their clients arriving from Spain.

Dennewill credits Thunderbird for opening her to new experiences and to an international life. “The people you meet and the perspectives you hear there all make you see the bigger picture,” she says.

## Hot lingerie in D.C.

After a few years as Teradata’s worldwide marketing manager, **Valerie Lucas '99** had grown weary of the long hours and constant travel. “The first year was great going different places; but after a while, I had no time to do anything or to see anything other than my hotel,” she says. She daydreamed of opening her own business.

“I wanted to do something gratifying to me for a few years,” Lucas says. “In my down time, I thought about what would make me happy, and I wanted it to be true in some way

to my French culture... perhaps even something with a little shock value.”

For Lucas, the answer was lingerie.

In 2003, she said “au revoir” to her corporate job and threw herself into launching Coup de Foudre, which means love at first sight. She cut personal expenses, pumped up her credit card limits and spent nine months writing a business plan.

In March, the first pair of panties went out the door in a discreet white bag.

“It was tough to make that jump because I had a very good salary,” she says. “But I found that this market was underserved, and I quickly recognized that there was a niche.”

The 800-square-foot boutique is located along heavily trod Pennsylvania Avenue in the up-and-coming Penn Quarter in Washington D.C. She plans on having e-sales by year-end (coupdefoudrelingerie.com) and is scouting for other locations.

Lucas is working longer hours than she ever has, but has no regrets about her decision. “I’m in this for myself, which is very different,” she says. “I get up every morning, and I’m very excited about the business. I really enjoy it.”

## Hot dogs in New York

In 1997, **Tammy McCarley '97** dreamed of working in international sports, with the Olympics as her ultimate goal. Although well-educated—with a B.B.A. in International Marketing from the University of Toledo and a Master of International Management from Thunderbird—she soon discovered that landing a job in the field of sports marketing was going to take a gold medal effort.

After interviewing with dozens of sports marketing firms in as many cities, McCarley accepted a \$300-a-week, three-month position at a sports marketing company in Atlanta. Eventually, she got hired and, during three years there, moved up the ladder.

In 1999, she moved to New York City to be at what she calls the center of the sports marketing universe. She accepted a marketing job at the Princeton Review, the college test preparation firm, and began teaching sports marketing courses at New York University. Soon, a new love entered her life: Sienna, a golden retriever/chow mix. McCarley had grown up surrounded by golden retrievers and prize-winning show dogs.

When she took trips with Sienna, she discovered how difficult it is to travel with a dog. Few hotels allow canine guests, and a number of beaches and parks ban them entirely. An idea was born.



### IN BLACK OR IN PINK, SENATOR?

Selling lingerie to Washington D.C.’s elite was the answer for Valerie Lucas '99 when she decided to say “au revoir” to the long hours and constant travel.



#### GOING TO THE DOGS TOGETHER

Blue Sky Dogs was created after Tammy McCarley '97 found that pet Sienna wasn't always welcome to join her when traveling.

She launched Blue Sky Dogs ([bluesky-dogsny.com](http://bluesky-dogsny.com)) in the Fall of 2003. It is the only dog-oriented group travel company on the East Coast and only one of a handful in the United States. The company offers both day and weekend trips that allow dog lovers to travel with their pets.

If McCarley's venture were to have any success, she knew

she had to attract New York business, where consumers respond more to word-of-mouth or media attention than advertising. She attended dog-related events, sent out press releases and used an online public relations resource. A chance meeting with a *New York Times* reporter at one event resulted in a mention of Blue Sky Dogs in an April 2004 article travel story. More than 100 people responded and 50 became active, as well as very happy and grateful, clients.

Before doing an organized tour, McCarley goes on a trial run of each inn with Sienna. "Some places claim to be dog-friendly, but they make the dogs sleep in kennels," she says. If she's satisfied, she books a weekend for the group.

"I'm now using the skills I learned at Thunderbird more than ever," she says.

#### A taste of France in L.A.

French-born Christine Splichal '83 made a name for herself as a successful Los Angeles restaurateur who, along with her chef husband Joachim, created the celebrated Patina Restaurant in Hollywood. Having been brought up in a patisserie owned by her parents in Biarritz, France, Splichal had restauranting in her blood and was able to handle the business end of Patina with flair.

The two formed the Patina Group in the early 1980s. It soon expanded and by the 1990s included a catering division, a mail order catalog, seven restaurants and five museum cafés. In 1999, they sold the company and, while her husband stayed with the business as a consultant, Splichal began contemplating her next challenge. It was then that a good friend, Yugoslavian-born aesthetician Olga Lorencin-Northrup, pitched the idea of opening their own spa.

In October 2002, the two launched Kinara Skin Care Clinic Spa and Café in West Hollywood's design district ([kinaraspa.com](http://kinaraspa.com)). Splichal manages the business end and runs its distinctive restaurant while Lorencin-Northrup oversees spa services and trains the staff. The spa has become a popular destination for movie celebrities, including clients Halle Berry, Ryan Seacrest, Christina Applegate and Robert Duvall.

It is the restaurant that distinguishes Kinara from other Los Angeles spas. Splichal abhors obsessing about carbohydrates and fats. Her philosophy is quintessentially French: one should eat balanced, high-quality food, including the occasional rich desert, as long as it has fresh, organic ingredients. In her view, good food leaves one satisfied and provides the nourishment needed for clear skin and good health. The meals served at Kinara are carefully balanced and contain the maximum amount of nutrients with mostly certified organic ingredients. She also serves wine and champagne, a rarity at spas.

"We offer a superior product, the best service and an educational approach on skin care and nutritional regimens," Splichal says.

All of this happened because Splichal came

Christine Splichal '83



to the United States in 1978, just before she planned to attend college. She so enjoyed the culture that she returned in 1982 to attend Thunderbird, choosing it over Berkeley and UCLA on the advice of a business teacher in France. On her way to Thunderbird, she met Joachim in Los Angeles.

"Going to Thunderbird really helped," she says. "The culture of business in France is different. Thunderbird gave me a very smooth transition into my work life. I took Spanish at Thunderbird, and I still use it. Thunderbird was a perfect fit for me." ▼

**DON'T WHINE, THERE'S WINE**  
Customers need not obsess about carbs and fat at Kinara. Christine Splichal's spa and café. Quintessentially French, rich deserts, wine and champagne are on the distinctive menu.