

T+L's TRAVEL ADVISORY BOARD

The *Travel + Leisure* TAB is a select group of owners and operators of the country's most important agencies. They share with T+L their expert opinions on the latest developments in the travel industry and their read on ever-evolving consumer trends. They are ultimate travel planners (typically for high rollers only) and can refer you to one of the many top-notch specialists they've trained.

Marcus Barlow

The vice president of sales for American Express Travel & Lifestyle Services oversees a team of some 1,500 counselors across North America who provide bespoke travel-concierge services and help card members get the most out of their rewards points. 602-537-4245; marcus.c.barlow@aexp.com

Betsy Donley

This 22-year industry veteran's agency, Camelback Odyssey Travel, is a specialist for clients seeking exotic adventure experiences such as fly-fishing in the Seychelles or the Andes, and even space travel with Virgin Galactic. 602-889-5909; betsyd@camelbacktravel.com

Julia P. Douglas

Douglas, who founded Jet Set World Travel in 2005, has road tested countless hotels, resorts, and villas with her two children in tow. Her agency excels at planning honeymoons and experiential family travel. 312-574-1181; julia@jetsetworldtravel.com

Jack S. Ezon

Ezon, who is an advisor for brands like Fairmont and Sofitel, has an eye for new talent, which has helped his company, Ovation Vacations,

meet the demands of younger luxury travelers when organizing destination celebrations and group travel. 212-329-7237; jezon@ovationtravel.com

Gail Grimmitt

Grimmitt leads a team of 1,500 agents in 70 branches across the U.S. and U.K. as head of the Travel Leaders Group Elite Travel Division, composed of the Protravel International and Tzell Travel Group brands—both known for their deep relationships with top hotels, airlines, and cruise lines. 212-651-2103; gail.grimmitt@travelleaders.com

Marc Kazlauskas

As president of Frosch's leisure division and U.S. branches, Kazlauskas, formerly of Tauck, fosters relationships with airlines, cruise lines, and rail services in order to craft seamless itineraries for business and pleasure trips. 212-784-0383; marc.kazlauskas@frosch.com

David Lowy

Those with sky-high budgets trust Lowy and his Vancouver-based team at Renshaw Travel to deliver extraordinary experiences like private jets and hard-to-get tee times at the world's

finest golf courses. 604-733-1010; dlowy@renshaustravel.com

Tom Marchant

Marchant is the co-founder of the Black Tomato Group, a London-based collection of travel and lifestyle brands known for bringing bespoke adventure trips up a notch through immersive activities. 646-558-3644; tom@blacktomato.com

Jani Miller

On T+L's A-List since 2004, this golf-loving CEO has firsthand knowledge of courses, resorts, and fitness experiences around the world. She regularly circles the globe herself on adventure trips to places like Antarctica. 800-633-5577; jani@centraltravel.com

Steve Orens

Because Orens has more than 25 years of industry experience and serves on boards for some of the biggest luxury hotel brands, he and his agency, Plaza Travel, can get their predominantly business-travel clients special treatment anytime. 818-990-4053; steve@plazatravel.com

Shawna Huffman Owen

Owen, who manages offices in Dayton and

Chicago in partnership with her father, Tony Huffman, shines at planning educational family vacations, romantic getaways for couples, and celebration trips for groups. 312-257-2988; shawna@huffmantravel.com

Mary Ann Ramsey

Cruising is among the many specialties of this former ASTA Agent of the Year and president of Betty Maclean Travel, which treats clients like lifelong partners by addressing long-range travel goals. 800-865-8111; maryann@bettymacleantravel.com

Sandy Schadler

Schadler is the marketing strategist for Travelink, an agency whose partnership with American Express Travel allows its network of advisors to provide the best rates and packages for clients. 615-367-4900; sandy.schadler@travelink.com

Wido Schaefer

The employee-owned TravelStore, begun by Schaefer in 1975, is now California's largest independent travel agency. He also sits on the advisory boards of hotel companies like Four Seasons. 800-343-9779; wido.s@travelstore.com

Anne Morgan Scully

President of McCabe World Travel and chairman of the Virtuoso Trust as well as an expert in hotels and cruise lines, Scully leads her team in creating one-of-a-kind itineraries packed with thoughtful gestures. 703-763-5055; anne@mccabeworld.com

Jim Strong

Accessibility, attention to detail—especially in hotel selection—and an unabashed penchant for luxury are what drives Strong, who, together with his mother, Nancy Strong, customizes trips that focus on cruising and five-star stays. 214-361-0027; jim@strongtravel.com

Kathryn Sudeikis

Voted among the "100 Most Powerful Women in Travel" by *Travel Agent* magazine, Sudeikis and her team at Acendas are pros at organizing large family reunions. 913-671-7700; ksudeikis@acendas.com

Liz Sadie Sutton

President of Alabama World Travel and an advisor to companies including Royal Caribbean International, this cruising expert knows about everything from the comfort of the beds to the best excursions in various ports of call. 334-260-2482; liz@suttonplanning.com

Kimberly Wilson Wetty

The copresident of Valerie Wilson Travel, one of the largest privately owned full-service travel consulting firms in the U.S., Wetty puts a heavy focus on families and top-shelf hotels. 212-592-1218; kimberly.w@vnet.com



AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND & THE SOUTH PACIFIC EXPERTS

AUSTRALIA

Cassandra Bookholder

Bookholder is always on the lookout for new ways to explore old favorites. Her latest finds include Brae, a farm-to-table restaurant in Birregurra, and her standbys include coastal treks outside Sydney—ideal escapes for those who don't have time to venture farther into the interior.

BEST FOR foodies, multigenerational families, adventure
602-889-5902;
cassandrab@camelbacktravel.com

Suzu Mercien-Ferol

Mercien-Ferol attracts a big-budget clientele with made-from-scratch itineraries that can tap in to Australia's cosmopolitan attractions as well as its bush luxury—like scoring the best suite at Kangaroo Island's Southern Ocean Lodge or seeing Tasmania's islands from the air.

BEST FOR luxury seekers, adventure, off-the-beaten-path itineraries
800-536-5328; suzy.mercien@touringtreasures.com

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Susanne Hamer

In a region that offers many packaged

vacations, Hamer creates South Pacific trips with a personal touch, taking scouting trips to find the best overwater bungalows for views and privacy as well as new shops, restaurants, and local experiences.

BEST FOR celebration trips, honeymooners, families
310-689-5411;
susanne.h@travelstore.com

Robin L. Turner

Turner has made it her mission to find hidden value at the islands' top properties. She also loves setting the scene for romantic moments—like helicopter rides to the heart-shaped Tupai atoll and candlelit dinners on the beach.

BEST FOR honeymooners, adventure, active travel
866-901-1234, ext. 83207; robin.l.turner@aexp.com

Christina Turrini

This Tahiti insider knows all the right people to make almost any dream a reality—proposal photographers, an around-the-clock fitness trainer, a top Tahitian tattoo artist—and loves to throw in surprises like a canoe breakfast, a romantic beach dinner, or private shopping at a black-pearl jeweler.

BEST FOR romance, adventure
800-638-0600, ext. 305; christina.turrini@frosch.com

NEW ZEALAND

Jean-Michel Jefferson

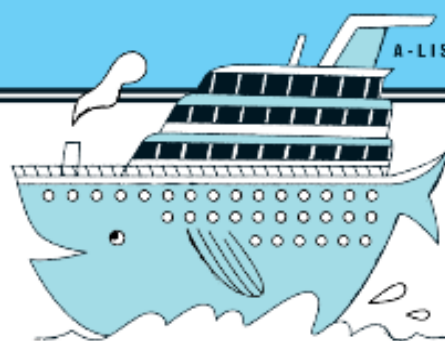
No request is off-limits for Jefferson, who has set up 4 x 4 trips across the Southern Alps and planned Maori blessings on a sacred mountain.

BEST FOR adventure, luxury seekers, off-the-beaten-path itineraries
64-3-447-3558; jean-michel@ahipara.com

Donna Thomas

Thomas has explored many corners of North and South Islands in search of hidden gems. She can help bird-watchers see the endangered yellow-eyed penguin or send avid trekkers on guided hikes to secret waterfalls in Paparoa National Park.

BEST FOR celebration trips, adventure, families
800-367-5494;
nztravel@aol.com



CRUISING EXPERTS

LARGE AND SMALL SHIPS

Scott Kertes

Those who have attempted to make sense of a cruise's fine print—which restaurants you can access at an all-inclusive rate, how much Wi-Fi costs, what is considered a premium drink—will understand Kertes's value. He's sailed on all the most popular lines and hunts for the best prices and packages.

BEST FOR couples, baby boomers, groups
800-828-4813, ext. 1003;
scott@vbdusa.com

Ruth Turpin

With more than 200 cruises under her belt, Turpin has a knack for pairing clients with the right itinerary and planning special on-board surprises—decorated staterooms, private dinners—that are typically difficult to secure.

BEST FOR luxury seekers
817-732-6991; ruth@cruiseselecttravel.com

Valerie Ann Wilson

In her 30-plus years on the job, Wilson has built 16 offices around the U.S., is chairman emeritus of Virtuoso's advisory board, and provides counsel for half a dozen travel brands. Her clients lean on her to score top hotels and match cruises according to group interests.

BEST FOR multigenerational families, adventure, foodies, luxury seekers, honeymooners
212-532-3400;
valeriew@vwti.com

SMALL SHIPS AND RIVER CRUISES

Betsy Patton

Patton knows her ships inside and out—quiet reading corners, which staterooms maximize sunrise or sunset views—including river cruises, which she notes are gaining popularity in Europe and mimicking their ocean counterparts with French balconies and better bathrooms.

BEST FOR multigenerational families, couples
239-260-4011;
bpatton@dt.com

Marcella Rappoport

Trust Rappoport to be on top of cruising trends (South American and Asian boat routes), questions (ship security procedures and health risks), and the newest ships, like the 31-cabin Crystal Esprit, which sails through the Seychelles and the Adriatic.

BEST FOR culture buffs, luxury seekers
212-329-7260;
mrappoport@ovationtravel.com



SPECIAL-INTEREST EXPERTS

ADVENTURE

Betty Jo Currie

Currie's mission is to connect people to far-flung destinations, whether that means flying in an open-door helicopter over Norway's Lofoten Islands, fishing in remote rivers in New Zealand, or dining in the bush in Botswana.

BEST FOR adventure, thrill seekers, multi-generational families
404-254-5677; bettyjo@curriecotravels.com

Brooke Garnett

Garnett, a former dive master in the Andaman Sea, creates trips that combine light adventure with traditional comforts—say, a stay in a tent in the Australian outback followed by a stint at the Park Hyatt Sydney.

BEST FOR adventure, millennials
212-627-7950; bgarnett@absolute-travel.com

Susan Sparks

About 70 percent of Sparks's trips include hiking and hiking, so she makes sure to map out paths in advance, noting distance, altitude, and incline to prepare her clients for journeys to Vietnam and Nepal.

BEST FOR active travel, honeymooners
970-925-1482; susan@poitraveler.com

AIR TRAVEL

Michael Holtz

Holtz has access to airline inventory that doesn't show up on Kayak or Expedia (at

discounts as deep as 40 percent on first- and business-class fares), and knows how to get the most luxurious options, like Etihad's Airbus 380 residence.

BEST FOR luxury seekers
212-268-9088; michael@smartflyer.com

BUSINESS TRAVEL

Jennifer Wilson-Buttigieg

Have a last-minute meeting or less than 12 hours between an executive retreat and family vacation? Wilson-Buttigieg knows the pressures of time-stretched travelers and manages behind-the-scenes details like visa procurement and group expense management.

BEST FOR C-level clients, last-minute trips, multigenerational families
212-592-1210; jenniferwb@vwti.com

CULTURE AND EDUCATION

Lisa Lindblad

Lindblad approaches destinations through the context of their people and traditions while building in time for spontaneity. Her local connections—writers, architects, chefs—are unmatched.

BEST FOR history lovers, curious travelers, foodies
212-876-2554; lisa@lisalindblad.com

Andrea Malis

Malis often presents trip ideas as a visual storyboard for those who travel to learn, connect, and dive in to

a destination. She also has a sixth sense for under-the-radar finds, like hidden restaurants in Tokyo or wilderness guides in Vancouver.

BEST FOR educational trips, luxury seekers
520-360-7843; amalis@odysseyluxce.com

DESTINATION CELEBRATIONS

Jody Bear

Bear treats planning a milestone vacation as an opportunity to create an over-the-top itinerary—previous trips have involved everything from a birthday lunch on an Icelandic glacier to a family Christmas in South Africa.

BEST FOR honeymooners, destination weddings, families
212-340-0304; jodyb@beartvl.com

John Clifford

Three decades' worth of contacts all over the world allow Clifford to organize extravagant group trips, from a weeklong wedding celebration in Lecce, Italy, to a private-island takeover in the Bahamas for an activity-packed reunion.

BEST FOR fashion and art lovers, luxury seekers, multigenerational families, LGBT travelers
619-299-2359; john@internationaltravelmanagement.com

DIVING

Robert Becker

Becker's connections in marine-research

circles produce one-of-a-kind trip opportunities (recently, a biodiversity-research expedition in Kiribati). He also goes out of his way to work with outfitters that support local economies and protect the oceans.

BEST FOR adventure, thrill seekers
212-409-9527; robert.becker@pro-travelinc.com

FISHING

Mollie Fitzgerald

Annual visits to emerging and bucket-list angler destinations like Russia, Iceland, and Norway make Fitzgerald an expert on when and where to cast a line. She also knows all the tricks, like a bait shop in Iceland that offers guided trips that include transportation from Reykjavik.

BEST FOR multigenerational families
724-935-1577; mollie@frontierstravel.com

FOOD AND WINE

Lynda Turley Garrett

Garrett believes restaurants are the cornerstone of every trip and plans entire vacations around food and drink (Tasmanian vineyard tours, cooking classes in India), making a point to scope out little-known spots.

BEST FOR multigenerational families, honeymooners, LGBT travelers
831-708-4030; lyndat@alpine-travel.com

Keith Waldon

Waldon is the owner of Departure Lounge, a high-tech coffee and wine bar in Austin, Texas, that doubles as a travel agency, and is best known for his innovative methods of helping clients find extraordinary food experiences, like special access to wineries in the Dijon and Vandennesse regions of France.

BEST FOR curious travelers, families, honeymooners
512-322-9399; kwaldon@departurelounge.com

GOLF

Chad Clark

Clark has played at hundreds of courses in over 30 countries and can get clients on exclusive greens around the globe—not to mention securing après-golf activities (like oysters at Berckmans Place during the Masters).

BEST FOR adventure, sports
602-228-2928; cclark@chadclarktravel.com

LGBT TRAVEL

David M. Rubin

Rubin ensures that his clients are warmly received wherever they travel, even in countries with less-tolerant governments, and doesn't shy away from advising guides and hotel staff on cultural sensitivities and communication practices.

BEST FOR luxury seekers, culture buffs
949-427-0199; david@davidtravel.com