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OFF DUTY 50 | UPGRADE

# Indulge in Wishful Thinking

Luxury travel companies can cater to your every worldly whim



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ILLUSTRATION BY JULIETTE BORDA FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

By Jackie Cooperman

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**IT'S HARD TO FIND** an elite travel company that doesn't offer packages with spectacular suites and access to private islands. But today's top-grade services go further, customizing over-the-top trips for you and yours.

Last month, Frank Rejwan launched *Abercrombie & Kent Lifestyle Club* ([aklifestyleclub.com](http://aklifestyleclub.com)), part of the 51-year-old luxury travel company Abercrombie & Kent. He says laughingly that he's sprouted "quite a few gray hairs" since, leading the upscale equivalent of a military operation. The Lifestyle Club's 35 employees have already satisfied requests such as a New Year's Eve helicopter excursion to behold the Northern Lights in Iceland, and a tented dinner party for 100 in Giza, Egypt. The fete overlooked the pyramids, which Mr. Rejwan arranged to stay lighted until 2 a.m., three hours later than normal.

Meanwhile, other travel firms that started as purveyors of insider information have tweaked their approaches, upgrading their services (and fees) and offering continuous coddling to demanding clients.

Last year Indagare ( *indagare.com* ), a members-only travel club, launched a collection of 12 intimate, luxurious group tours, including a family voluntourism trip to Nicaragua and a New Zealand golfing excursion that involved flying around on a private jet. The company can customize the journeys for clients. In fact, this year Indagare's bespoke business is double what it was in 2012, says founder Melissa Biggs Bradley.

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*'He arranged for the pyramids in Giza to stay lighted until 2 a.m., three hours later than normal.'*

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"People want immediate answers, but they become overwhelmed by everything online," she says, "and they want us to sort it out for them."

Indagare's basic membership costs \$325 a year and includes bookings for an unlimited number of one-stop trips. Ms. Bradley and her staff of 12 experts offer extensive destination information and preferential relationships with hotels,

securing rooms during crowded events like the Venice Biennale and Art Basel Miami.

Clients can upgrade to a \$500 Elite membership, which includes planning for one customized multi-stop trip a year, or the \$1,350 Connoisseur level, for three multi-stop trips. Indagare's consultants jump through hoops for those tiers, finding pet sitters in Italy or enrolling kids in soccer leagues in Hong Kong.

London-based Nota Bene Global ( *notabeneglobal.com* ) began as a publisher of candy-colored magazines for very discerning travelers, with an annual subscription costing \$1,500. It shifted to planning travel for the most exacting of clients about five years ago.

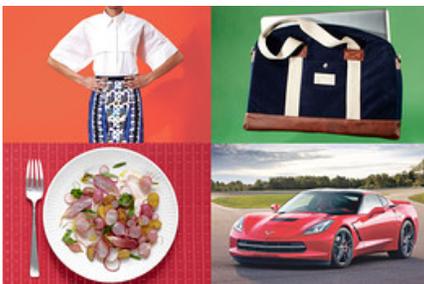
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#### THE OFF DUTY SPRING 50 »

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*Off Duty's spring issue features 50 fresh ideas to kick-start the season, from bright, slim-cut suits and luxe laptop totes to zesty radish recipes and a five-step plan to unlock the power of your fitness-tracking gadgets.*

- For complete list, [click here](#)



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Basic memberships cost around \$4,000 a year and include unlimited hotel bookings. But the real attention costs \$22,500 and up (and up). For that fee, Mr. Lassman and his team will make complex trip arrangements—including last-minute changes and access to, say, the first lady of Syria (true story). Nota Bene has approximately 70 bespoke clients, and will only accept 30 more.

Abercrombie & Kent's Lifestyle Club, which is capping its membership at 600, provides each client with a dedicated consultant who can help with everything from medical emergencies to procuring tickets to sold-out shows. A one-year family membership costs \$10,500, on top of the \$3,750 joining fee, but there are no limits on the number of requests members can make, and callers are guaranteed an answer by the third ring—a modern-day miracle on par with your own illuminated pyramids.

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