

PRESS RELEASE

December 2017

**The 12 most influential luxury
Travel Designers in the world**

**Traveller
Made[®]**

The 12 most influential luxury travel designers in the world

© Sandrine Boyer Engel



Exclusive HD picture available upon request

Caption

For the very first time, Traveller Made is revealing the 12 most influential luxury Travel Designers in the world (along with CEO & Founder Quentin Desurmont). They were hosted at Barrière Hotels. Clothes worn by the winners come from Boutiques Le Printemps Deauville.

What is it about?

Launched in 2013, Traveller Made – the world's leading and largest network dedicated to ultra-luxury travel – has just revealed the best 12 Travel Designers in the world.

For the first time ever, they have come together for an exclusive photo shoot in Le Normandy Deauville, a Barrière Hotel.

Who are they?

The twelve people featured in this exclusive photo have been voted as the best Travel Designers in the world.

These twelve movers and shakers of the travel world have been rewarded for their expertise in five specific aspects of luxury travel: Tailor-made Travel Design, Destination Knowledge, Client Knowledge, Supplier Knowledge, and Crisis Management.

From left to right and from top to bottom:

Top Row:

Jan Vos - The Netherlands
Ico Inanc - Italy
Jonas Rask Eilersen - Israel
Evgenia Komarova - Russia
Doug Easton - USA
Gemma Antrobus - UK

Middle Row:

Manuel Chablais - Switzerland
Sheila Zatz - Brazil
Olivier Weisse - France
Gonzalo Gimeno - Spain

Bottom Row:

Michaela Kügler - Germany
Quentin Desurmont (CEO & Founder Traveller Made®)
Isao Numano - Japan

(Individual HD pictures and interviews with each Travel Designer are available upon request)

Where and when?

Traveller Made just played host to over 680 Travel Designers and partners of the Luxury Travel Industry (hoteliers, DMCs, luxury experts, journalists) at its annual meeting in Deauville.

The world's leading and largest network dedicated to ultra-luxury travel honoured the 12 award-winners (2016-2017), voted by Hoteliers & Destinations Management Companies.

To select the very best Travel Designers currently in the network, there is a voting community of more than 2,000 experts specialising in luxury: 600 hoteliers, 80 DMCs, 1,500 Travel Designers.

Ambassadors of Elegance

Dealing daily with the world's wealthiest families and travellers, the 12 best travel designers are expected to embody elegance. As they have now become true ambassadors of style, these highly influential luxury craftsmen and women donned outfits designed by international luxury fashion houses for the photo shoot, courtesy of La Boutique Printemps, Deauville.

The new stars of luxury

Over the past decades, there has been a craze for fashion designers, then contemporary artists and, most recently, the transformation of Michelin-starred chefs into real-life celebrities. It is now time for Travel Designers to step into the spotlight. Their secret skills and hidden expertise are absolutely essential for the most fortunate travellers on the planet (wealthy families, business owners and other industry leaders, Ultra-High-Net-Worth-Individuals (UHNWI) who have a minimum of \$30M in liquid assets).

As important as a "family officer" or a personal lawyer, the private Travel Designer is often as familiar as a friend, a confidant, and knows their client inside out. Sometimes with just a short WhatsApp specification, they are able to build a trip in such a way that it creates lasting memories.

For these highly demanding clients, Travel Designers build nothing less than "haute couture" travel itineraries. Focused on understanding their client's unique expectations, there is no doubt that their work is a true craft.

Much more than just planners, trend hunters, ultimate luxury suppliers or influential pathfinders, these up-and-coming stars of luxury travel create unforgettable moments for the wealthiest people on the planet. They are the brains behind the most extraordinary trips ever organised. Every one of them could write a book filled with anecdotes about the exceptional trips they have designed...

A matter of price? No, it's all about value!

By 2020, the luxury travel sector is set to be revolutionised: wealthy clients prefer small, intimate units in terms of accommodation. But there is also another phenomenon that deals with organisation. More than just tailor-made, wealthy travellers want haute couture, uniqueness. Money is no object: the essential thing is that the trip is designed only for them and cannot be done by anyone else.

To achieve this, they need to call upon the expertise of a Travel Designer who has developed extensive knowledge of destinations and suppliers, but also the wishes and needs of their clients.

Creating rarity, uniqueness, and therefore value, is the primary talent of the Traveller Made community, which was inspired by the stakeholders in luxury goods companies, those which used to be small local businesses and have transformed into well-known international empires.

A brief insight: In the wines and spirits sector, the prestigious Cognac House Louis XIII created a buzz when its Mathusalem – a 6-litre bottle carved by the French Crystal House Baccarat – sold for €70,000. It takes several weeks to make just one bottle: orders come from all over the world and there is a waiting list. This is a stark comparison with the luxury travel sector, in which a Traveller Made member agency created a unique trip, the HD Travel Experience, where the client becomes the producer and actor of their own film, like the ultimate adventurer.

These are moments in life that are almost priceless. This exceptional creation of value was crying out to be endorsed by an internationally-recognised prize, as explained by French sociologist Pierre-Marie Chauvin, who carried out a study on the importance of different prizes and labels (such as the Paul Bocuse Prize or the Palme d'Or in Cannes, etc.).

The Traveller Made network highlights the extraordinary talent of luxury Travel Designers to create the most beautiful and unique trips. The network is the first of its kind to bring together luxury travel agencies from all over the world and, as such, its members and partners are more than qualified to select the best Travel Designers worldwide. This prize is very important as it contributes to the recognition of expertise and to shining light onto an unknown profession, together with the rising stars of the luxury sphere.

That is why the 12 people featured on the picture literally make the world!

About Traveller Made

Traveller Made is a network community of luxury Travel Designers dedicated to providing unique and exclusive bespoke journeys to travellers looking for different and original experiences and requiring skilled and knowledgeable advisors who are fully committed to fulfilling their requirements.

Key figures about Traveller Made

- Launch date: September 2013
- 300 member agencies: 137 in Europe + 163 in North America, South America, Russia, Asia, Middle East, Oceania
- Presence in 58 countries
- Significant growth: 50% more member agencies in 2016 vs 2015
- 100% of itineraries are tailor-made
- No deals with cruise companies or tour operators (unlike other networks)
- Member Agencies' clients are 50,000 ultra-wealthy families worldwide (out of 200,000 total ultra wealthy families worldwide, i.e. 25 %)
- These families own \$30 million to \$50 billion in liquid assets.



Traveller Made®

PRESS CONTACT

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EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL DESIGN

Travel
designer
2017



Most Thorough Designer, voted by Hotel Partners
**Ms Sheila Zatz - Summit Viagens e turismo
BRASIL**

Selection criteria: Rigorous, reliable, expert, respectful, anticipator and solution-maker

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

The 50th wedding anniversary celebration for a dear couple who travelled to South Africa with their whole family. We closed 3 lodges, just for them, and in each one there was a party organised by one of their sons.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

A group of VIPs travelled to a very trendy beach in the north-east of Brazil and the organisation was absolutely flawless. The beach is not very easy to reach but, surprisingly, the 7-hour trip was very pleasant!

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

Definitely a honeymoon that I organised: the bride was afraid of flying and the groom wanted to travel to Asia. From Brazil, it takes about 24 hours and we had to organise a trip with several short-distance flights. It wasn't easy. After so much work, their marriage didn't even last a year!

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

A trip to China. It was really a perfect itinerary and they were sending messages to me all the time during the trip. I'd like to do it too.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Israel. It was a big surprise; the country is amazing.

EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL DESIGN



Travel
designer
2017

Most Creative Designer, voted by Hotel Partners
**Ms Gemma Antrobus - Haslemere Travel
UK**

Selection criteria: Imaginative, knowledgeable, curious, inventive, ingenious and inspirational

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

A recent honeymoon that included visiting some wonderful properties in East Africa then flying over to private islands in Malaysia – a 4-week trip. A really different combination and one that the clients extended whilst on their travels as they were having such a great time. It was a surprise for the wife, so she knew nothing about where she was going, what to pack, etc. We had to ensure the husband had everything covered for the trip. She was delighted!!

What travel creation are you most proud of?

A 6-month round-the-world trip, staying in 5* plus accommodation and incorporating some exclusive experiences for the clients. This was just for a couple following his retirement.

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

Any trip working with multi-generational families when they are flying in from homes across the world. We have one client who books a 20-bedroom 'home' in a different location every year. She stays for 1 month and her family and friends fly in at various points over the course of her stay, all staying for a different number of nights and needing different room combinations. It can sometimes be hard to ensure we have enough beds for everyone, but it works out fine in the end.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

Anything that involves the 'Silk Road', which is an area I am yet to explore fully.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Africa: the further off the beaten track, the better!

EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL DESIGN

Travel
designer
2017

Most Thorough Designer, voted by DMC* Partners

Mr Jan Vos - Vos Van Loon & Partners

THE NETHERLANDS

Selection criteria: Rigorous, reliable, expert, respectful, anticipator and solution-maker

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

A trip around the world in 6 weeks, including islands like the Azores, the Caribbean, Hawaii, Polynesia, Macaronesia, Thailand, Mauritius, Zanzibar and Greece. All islands with such different characters, nature and populations, but they are all surrounded by the ocean, water, fish. Water flows freely around the world, and we humans strive to feel free as well. The reason behind the trip was that the clients had sold their company and wanted to celebrate it with a special "voyage".

What travel creation are you most proud of?

Any trip from which a client returns having had a "life changing experience", one they will never forget. Trips make an impression on travellers in many different ways. Each and every client has their own special set of memories: nature they admired, people they met, food they ate, activities they tried.... My aim is to get to know as many places as possible so that I can make recommendations for my clients.

When guests tell me that they still have a special place in their heart for the estancia in Argentina, the cruise around the Galapagos Islands, the views from their hotel room in Bali or the shopkeeper they met in Stone Town, it flatters me a lot. It makes me feel proud and happy.

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

Complex itineraries involving flights, boats, hotels, cars and excursions, combined with a difficult client.



Some clients change their mind many times, so it's not only about organising the trip but also shaping the client's wishes and thoughts into a practical itinerary, as well as respecting the ideas and wishes of their fellow travellers. Flexibility from our side is essential, and pro-active thinking is vital. During the trip, in my mind I am more or less travelling with them, I know exactly where they are each day and which items need to be checked.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

I would love to travel around the world, staying close to nature and water, and ideally with someone I love who shares the same interests as me.

Swimming is a passion, so pools, rivers, lakes and the ocean make me feel happy.

Luxury as we see it is very pleasant, but I can still remember the night I spent in a hammock on an uninhabited Caribbean Island; no one around, just a thatched roof above me. That, for me, is real luxury. The fisherman who just happened to come ashore prepared his catch of the day just for me!

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Spain. I speak fluent Spanish and my background is studying the Spanish language, culture and literature. The country feels like my second home, hopefully one day I might even live there again.



Travel
designer
2017

Most Creative Designer, voted by DMC*
Partners

Mr Ico Inanc - Il Viaggio ITALY

Selection criteria: Imaginative, knowledgeable,
curious, inventive, ingenious and inspirational

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

A trip to Japan for a lady who had two main reasons to go there: first, to visit the places she had planned to see years ago, before the sudden death of her lover, and second, her interest in 1920s Japanese fashion, jewellery and antique textiles. A real psychological drama unfolding at every step!

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

Sailing around the Raja Ampat Islands in New Guinea.

EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL DESIGN

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

A trip to the Canadian Arctic for a family of 4, with a private plane excursion to search for polar bears.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

My Japanese pilgrimage itinerary and my South African literature trip (following the footsteps of South African writers).

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Many and none. It depends on my mood. When I'm looking for inner peace, I think of the Karoo Desert in South Africa. If I want to feel joyful, I think about sailing around the Greek islands. If I am contemplating the meaning of life, I would want to be in Svalbard. Again, it depends on my state of mind.

EXPERTISE 2 : DESTINATION KNOWLEDGE



Most Expert Designer, Destination Knowledge
**Mr Doug Easton - Celestielle
USA**

Travel
designer
2017

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

A fourteen-month tour of the world's most interesting places, for a family of five. It covered every continent and included 108 extraordinary hotels, lodges, camps, and ships. Its planning was a labour of love.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

Our company, Celestielle. It was born organically, out of pure passion and with a shocking lack of aspiration on the part of its owners, John Ziegler and I, to be a successful business. Nobody could be more surprised than we are at what has evolved. We pinch ourselves on a daily basis.

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

A treasure hunt in each of four different cities (London, Paris, New York, and Los Angeles) during a four-week honeymoon for a bride, a groom, and 20 guests. We designed the treasure hunts and wrote the clues (as limericks, poems, puzzles, etc.). All four treasure hunts unfolded like a military operation.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

There is almost no client travel itinerary that we have prepared that we have not also done ourselves, invariably beforehand but on a few occasions afterwards.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Any place that changes me for the better.

EXPERTISE 3 : CLIENT KNOWLEDGE

Most Expert Designer, Client knowledge
Mr Gonzalo Gimeno - Elefant Travel Consulting
SPAIN

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

A west to east trans-African adventure, from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean combining the Namib desert dunes, the Okavango Delta, Victoria Falls, the Valley of South Luangwa and the Beaches of Mozambique using small private planes, helicopters, and with amazing luxury camps.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

An itinerary involving a river border crossing between Thailand and Laos, including Thailand, Laos and Cambodia at the end.

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

An itinerary combining Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand and the Cook Islands, starting in Madrid and ending in Lima. Coordinating the different seasons, impossible flight combinations, diverse content, the complexity of working with DMCs* and direct suppliers, and the client challenges (a mother travelling alone with 2 young children), managing



Travel
designer
2017

the costs and attending to all of the day-to-day, last minute requests during the month-long trip.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

A trans-Andean journey: Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Atacama, Salta, Buenos Aires. One that combines nature, anthropology, wildlife, archaeology, history, food, and adventure.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Asturias. Home is where the heart is.

EXPERTISE 4 : SUPPLIER KNOWLEDGE



Travel
designer
2017

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

The clients (a couple) were foodies, wine lovers and interested in culture. I designed a special itinerary starting in the Basque country for specialised gourmet dining, on to Bordeaux, then chartering a private jet to Florence for a private visit of the "Vasari Corridor" and an exclusive reception with the Ferragamo family. In the Basque country, they stayed in the "Marques de Riscal" and went to a relatively unknown Michelin-starred restaurant called "Etxebarri", then travelled down to Bordeaux for a private visit of the "Château Haut-Brion". After that, they took a private jet to Florence for the private visit and reception.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

It was a trip to South Africa. I have clients who are Japanese flower arranging teachers (Japan's top 6 teachers). They wanted to visit somewhere they had seen on TV, but they only knew it was in South Africa. I checked all the information I had been given and deduced that it must have been "Namaqualand". It is normally almost a desert (no flowers), but for just a few weeks at the beginning of September, it is covered in several types of daisies. It took two days to travel there from Cape Town and it was just as the flowers had started to blossom.

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

A three-generational family trip. They could only travel in the middle of August because of their parents' business. They wanted to save time, swim in the sea, and explore an undiscovered region. My idea was to use private jets to fly to difficult-to-reach places where there were no

Most Expert Designer, Supplier Knowledge **Mr Isao Numano - Regency Group Inc JAPAN**

direct flights, use a helicopter for places that could not be reached by plane, and charter a huge private yacht for a day's excursion. Destination: Southern Italy (Puglia) and the Campania region. They flew from Frankfurt to Bari by private jet (after flying from Haneda airport to Frankfurt in first class, which was more spacious than a private jet). In Alberobello, I chose the Luxury Trulli house for a 3-night stay to visit the coast and some small villages. Then they took a private helicopter to Ravello, with their luggage transported separately by van. I then chartered a huge yacht for the day so they could cruise on the Mediterranean Sea, with a meal provided on board then dropping anchor in the middle of the sea for a swim. They then returned to Frankfurt by private jet, and onward to Tokyo in first class. It took about 6 months to prepare the whole thing.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

Personally, I love gastronomy trips. My clients are foodies but they do not just dine in Michelin-starred restaurants. I sometimes take them to Michelin-starred restaurants and sometimes to local bistros. For instance, in the Champagne region of France, I organise a special tour of the champagne cellars and a tasting session in the reception hall at "Moët & Chandon", which is not open to the public, then I take the clients to "Regis et Jacques Marcon" to taste mushrooms and "Michel Bras" for vegetables. It is very difficult to get into these places, especially for the Japanese, but I manage it. A cooking lesson by a grand chef (Christophe Cussac) at "Joel Robuchon Monte-Carlo". A special visit of the kitchens and dinner at the Chef's table. My favourite type of itinerary is luxury, as well as everyday lifestyle and gentle adventures.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Big cities and well-known cities that I have already visited. Or places off the beaten track in Italy or France. Every time I visit little villages or towns, I always find new things. Not just art, culture, historical monuments, I really get to experience their daily life. I will not say this is only in Italy and France, but these two countries have so much to offer.

EXPERTISE 5 : CRISIS

Most Expert Designer, Crisis management
**Ms Evgenia Komarova - Personne
Travel Club
RUSSIA**

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

Morocco, "Moon Mood": the clients wanted isolation, to be in the middle of nowhere, with a white piano and stars. Maldives, "Dive Into Thoughts": 7 days of isolation, 1 island, 1 bed, 7 different activities every day.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

Peru, "Escape From Reality": 14 luxury days of being hidden away from other people. Just two people, a rock lodge, overnight stays with Amazonian friends, Titicaca just for 2.

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

South Africa + Botswana: an itinerary for 120 super-VIP clients, men only. Why? Extreme conditions, mood changes, guide problems, logistics at the time (in 2012). Tibet: Why? Understanding of reality, accepting the rules, health risks, visa changes.



Travel
designer
2017

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

Luxury Russia. I want to create unique lodges and tented camps for adventurous families in Russia's top destinations, providing the perfect service, food, items and luxury in every detail. It is still unique, even for us!

A family trip to Iceland, a journey to the centre of the earth. Why? My son is the great fan of the movie and believes that this "other world" still exists in Iceland. I want to find this centre together with my family and recreate the expedition from the book.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Peru is the place that most appeals to me at the moment, but I am a massive fan of beach destinations.

I asked a lot of questions when I was in Peru: who could build such a city, how did the huge stones appear on top of the mountains? I was shocked that people still live their life following the old customs and traditions, the same way they lived centuries ago. That is why this is my dream destination, and I definitely want to go back. They have everything: food, people, nature, mystery and love! They are real people with real emotions. And the main selling point is the energy there: you can feel this special energy in everything and everyone.

But if we talk about favourite destination in terms of where I make the most money, feel most at home, then it is definitely the Maldives, Mauritius, the Seychelles and the Caribbean Islands.



EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL DESIGN

Travel
designer
2016

Most Creative Designer, voted by DMC* Partners
Mr Manuel Chablais - Ailes Voyage
SWITZERLAND

Selection criteria: Imaginative, knowledgeable, curious, inventive, ingenious and inspirational

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

I could talk about an 8-month round-the-world trip for a couple celebrating their retirement, with all flights, selected hotels and private guides booked ahead. But the one trip that was most rewarding for me was a short, 3-night weekend. What made this short weekend unforgettable was the scenario: a "honeymoon birthday" with a private 3 Michelin-star chef cooking only for them in the middle of a Greek temple. Private jet, private yacht, private helicopter, amazing villa. My reward was my clients' tears of joy when they came back! To enable my clients to feel such emotion is my professional goal.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

The next trip I am planning... And I can't tell you anything else, as it'll ruin the surprise!

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

Definitely the 8-month trip mentioned above. My first meeting with my clients was on a Monday morning, and departure was announced 4 days later. Can you imagine booking dozens of flights, hotels, customised transfers, private guides every day with bespoke tours,

restaurant bookings... and all in just 4 days? And the most amazing thing is that nothing went wrong!

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

Well, as any real Travel Designer should do, I visit all the places I suggest before my clients travel. In order to do that, I travel for 4 months every year, and have done so for many years now. It makes me want to tag along on every single trip we sell, as I know what great places the clients will visit.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

That is the question people ask me all the time, along with "What is the best hotel?" Actually, it does not matter what my favourite destination is. What matters is to find out what would be my client's favourite destination. My favourite hotels might not tick all the boxes for my clients.

Ok, some days, I would love to be on a yoga retreat so that I could try to relax... Some days, I would love to take all my buddies on a surfing adventure around Indonesia... Other days, I would love to be sailing alone in the middle of the Atlantic...

And when will I have the chance to wake up in Isfahan, in Kanazawa, in the Atacama Desert or in the ruins of Hampi?

EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL

Travel
designer
2016

Most Creative Designer, voted by Hotel Partners

Olivier Weisse - Weisse Voyage FRANCE

Selection criteria: Imaginative, knowledgeable, curious, inventive, ingenious and inspirational

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

A tour of the Indian Ocean by seaplane from the Maldives to Africa and Madagascar.

This was three months of non-stop organisation with two other people, so that the client could visit places nobody else goes to. This required a bit of imagination and a very good network of trustworthy contacts. The brief given by the client was: "For my 40th birthday, I have a budget of several hundred thousand euros. I do not want to know what will happen, I want to invite 60 people and you have a year and a half to create a great tailor-made travel experience."

What travel creation are you most proud of?

A 4-week safari along the west coast of South America, from Tierra del Fuego to the Caribbean (Venezuela - Los Roques), going up the Chilean coast. There was a bit of history in Peru, short passes through Bolivia and Colombia. Geographically it's something I would never have imagined, it was simply what the client wanted, it was pure creation. I like to sculpt a map, to create everything from scratch. The final 9 days were in Los Roques. Great success. Amazing.

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

All the trips crossing the South Pacific islands, because of the international date line.

Anything that relates to the international date line is tricky, because the air connections are complex, logistically speaking. When you head into the Pacific, which makes up half of the planet's surface, it's like a dream world because there are archipelagos whose



names are so evocative, but it is hard to understand the distances involved (it's difficult to travel from the Marshall islands to Fiji, for example) and this is where the role of Travel Designer takes all its meaning. Nothing flows smoothly, so my role as adviser is essential.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

Let's put it the other way around (since I've been everywhere my clients have been).

The last trip I designed for myself is one my clients would love to do. Paris - Los Angeles - The Brando, Tetiaroa - Tokyo - Paris. It lasted 10 days and it was quite full-on: a little bit of beach time in California, very laid-back, and extreme Asia that is still so exotic, a real habit-breaker. This three-step world tour is very efficient, it allows you to see many things at once.

What is your favourite destination? Why?

I remain faithful to Africa, it is such a mosaic! And there is still so much to discover... We all know the north with the Maghreb, a little of the west with Senegal, but then what? There is a vacuum of 11,000 km before reaching southern Africa (Botswana, Mozambique) and South Africa. I am fascinated by it, it remains one of the unparalleled continents for its potential for discovery, and there is no other place that contains so much diversity. And I'm not even talking about its vast potential in terms of luxury. I am currently part of a small think-tank of investors looking to replicate the "lodge model" there (with prices starting at €2,000 per night).

EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL



Travel
designer
2016

Most Thorough Designer, voted by Hotel Partners

Mr Jonas Rask Eilersen - Rask Travel ISRAEL

Selection criteria: Rigorous, reliable, expert, respectful, anticipator and solution-maker

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

An ongoing 8-month height-of-luxury, round-the-world trip for a family, during which I am practically the concierge and am in touch with the client on a daily basis. The itinerary has included everything from private jets in Indonesia to private yachts in Bora Bora, from the world's top hotels and lodges in New Zealand and Australia to rainforest tents on tropical islands, as well as a number of Aman's most luxurious properties across Asia. The journey's still in progress - next up are the Philippines and Japan, where we've arranged some truly exceptional experiences for them.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

I absolutely love travelling by train, and we just had clients travel on a private train from Moscow to Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, ending up in Kazakhstan - I was so jealous! Another one has to be a gorilla safari in Rwanda, or an architecture tour to Asmara, Eritrea, followed by snorkelling off the unspoilt coastline of that country. Also, I'd lie if I said I wouldn't want to join a couple of our top Oscar-winning VIP entertainment clients when they're at the Oscars, enjoying the arrangements we've put together for them...

What is your favourite destination? Why?

Japan is my personal favourite; it's both exotic and different, as well as being safe and easy to travel around. People are friendly and engaging, the sights are extraordinary, the food is absolutely amazing. Tokyo is simply the best city destination there is; I could easily hole up in one of the luxury hotel towers and stay there for months at a time...

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

There have been many; they're the ones where we really have to prove our resourcefulness to create arrangements which touch the heart and soul. One I remember in particular was a month-long motorcycle trip for a single traveller around Kyrgyzstan; another was for a family who travelled independently around Ethiopia to show their adopted children the children's heritage. Yet another was arranging a wedding in Mallorca for a male couple who'd dreamt about the possibility of getting married for so long that they'd almost given up. All beautiful arrangements in their own way.

What travel creation are you most proud of?

At RASK, we have always prided ourselves on our ability to rise to a challenge, and we did just that when we worked for the European Games in 2015, in Baku in Azerbaijan (often dubbed the world's largest sporting and cultural event that nobody has ever heard of!). It was a truly momentous challenge, dealing with literally thousands of people, including super-VIPs, and involving extremely complex (and often very luxurious) travel and logistics arrangements - big client, big budget, big arrangements. To this day, I've never experienced a more impressive spectacle than the ceremonies at those Games, and I was very proud of RASK's involvement in making it all happen.

EXPERTISE 1 : TAILOR-MADE TRAVEL DESIGN



Most Thorough Designer, voted by DMC* Partners
Michaela Kügler - Design Reisen
GERMANY

Selection criteria: Rigorous, reliable, expert, respectful, anticipator and solution-maker

What is the most beautiful, extraordinary travel itinerary you have ever created for a client?

4 weeks in New Zealand, including the most beautiful luxury lodges and private jet transfers, followed by 5 nights at Laucala Island, Fiji.

NZ: Lots of amazing excursions, like a helicopter landing on White Island, one of the world's most accessible live volcanoes with impressive geothermal activity; a private charter catamaran with on-board wine tasting; a seaplane excursion to Waiheke island and much more...

Fiji: Laucala Island - for me, this is one of the most exclusive and beautiful islands on earth!

What travel creation are you most proud of?

A travel itinerary in Japan with Aman Tokyo, Amanemu and the best traditional ryokan (inn), the Gora Kadan, including a reservation at the restaurant owned by Jiro Honten, a 94-year-old star sushi chef. In his 3-star restaurant it is almost impossible to get a table (Obama always eats there when he is in Tokyo). Here is some information: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sukiyabashi_Jiro

What travel creation was the most complex to organise and for what reason?

A 3-month round-the-world trip including a few different countries and islands. Why was it so complex to organise? Some special requirements the clients wanted to include (like a visit to Pokemon City in Tokyo, tickets for a fashion show/opera/Michelin-starred restaurants, New Year in Sydney on board the True North cruise ship) as well as the involvement of a couple of DMCs, which was challenging because of the flight connections, etc.

What client travel itinerary would you have liked to do for yourself and why?

Africa! A safari in Tanzania including all the Singita properties, followed by 1 week on Mnemba Island to relax! Why? Because the combination of safari (animals/adventure etc.) and, after that, relaxing in paradise sounds perfect to me!

What is your favourite destination? Why?

I am not sure yet so I'll just have to keep travelling and looking for it! Lucky me!

It is really impossible to say! The world is too big and I have had so many perfect moments -whether it was around the corner in Italy or at the other side of the world staying at The Brando in French Polynesia! Luckily, in my job, I have the chance to see lots of different destinations and probably the most beautiful places in the world, which is the greatest privilege ever! And, for me, it is much more than just the destination itself as it is always a combination of extraordinary people, breath-taking moments, unique experiences and many other things.

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