

**TRAVEL+
LEISURE**

family

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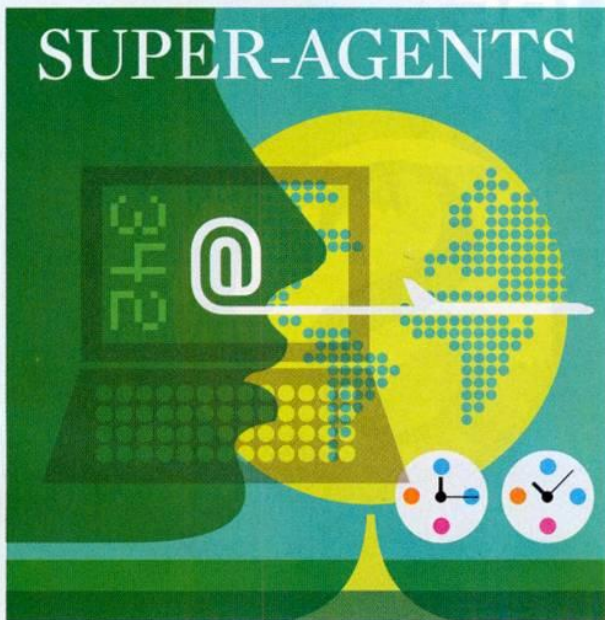
WORLD'S BEST HOTELS FOR FAMILIES

The Stafford London,
No. 1 for families in Europe,
photographed by
Edina van der Wyck.

TOP 100 KID-FRIENDLY PLACES TO STAY AROUND THE GLOBE

PLUS **CRUISES, ADVENTURE OUTFITTERS,
AND 7 GREAT DEALS TO BOOK NOW**

A-LIST



WITH A WEALTH OF EXPERTISE, THESE POWER BROKERS ARE THE MOST INFORMED AND CONNECTED IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY.

Priscilla Alexander ✓

KNOWN FOR Her ability to match clients to the right agent among her hundreds of employees—a relationship she firmly believes determines the success of a trip. Alexander listens carefully to what you're saying (and what you're *not*) to determine who'll work best with you to create the ultimate travel experience.

FEE Varies.
CONTACT Protravel International, New York City; 212/651-2101; priscilla@protravelinc.com.

Barbara Gallay ✓

KNOWN FOR Deep connections with top hotel general managers across the globe. Now with the reach and clout of global travel company Frosch (which acquired Gallay's boutique agency Linden Travel in 2009), she is uniquely primed to pull strings, open doors, and find room when many others claim it's impossible.

FEE Varies.
CONTACT Frosch Travel, New York City; 212/404-6300; barbara.gallay@frosch.com.

Lisa Lindblad

KNOWN FOR Her eagle eye in uncovering the truly authentic, cultivated over decades of merging the high-end with the rustic, the undiscovered with the venerated. Lindblad's background is cultural anthropology, so if it's the best *suzanis* in Kazakhstan or finest handwoven ikat silk *sinhs* in Laos you're after, Lindblad's your agent.

FEE Varies.
CONTACT Lisa Lindblad Travel Design, New York City; 212/876-2554; lisa@lisalindblad.com.

Mary Ann Ramsey ✓

KNOWN FOR Tracking down hidden gems and what's new in hotels, restaurants, and cruises. Ramsey spends days at a destination—always with advance reports from ground staff about

where to go, from the popular to the under-the-radar spots.

FEE Varies.
CONTACT Betty Maclean Travel, Naples, Fla.; 239/513-0333; maryann@bettymacleantravel.com.

Guy Rubin ✓

KNOWN FOR Rubin is the China expert other agents call for recommendations (among those who outsource to him is members-only travel club Nota Bene). His superb coterie of guides—one of whom is carefully matched with each client—dissolve cultural barriers and enhance any journey.

FEE \$200.
CONTACT Imperial Tours, Beijing; 888/888-1970; guy@imperialtours.net.

Anne Morgan Scully ✓

KNOWN FOR "Travel experiences form a sort of wardrobe," Scully says. And in this respect, her repeat-trip record with clients makes her their personal shopper. She carefully assesses taste, style, and comfort levels to craft trips that fit to a T. As such, Scully recognizes that often the tried and true trumps the new—to wit: she's been a champion of London's Goring hotel for two decades, long before Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge (then Kate Middleton) chose to stay there before her wedding.

FEE Varies.
CONTACT McCabe World Travel, McLean, Va.; 703/762-5055; anne@mccabeworld.com.

Pallavi Shah ✓

KNOWN FOR Her in-depth expertise on India and Italy, with a focus on art. Shah can get access to cultural sites and private collections that aren't open to the public. She's fast becoming a master on Turkey as well, and will guide you through the back rooms of Istanbul's bazaar and to the ruins of Laodicea.

FEE \$450.
CONTACT Our Personal Guest,

New York City; 646/284-2454; opgny@ourpersonalguest.com.

Jim Strong ✓
Nancy Strong

KNOWN FOR The Strong's know first impressions count: that's why in Dallas, where Strong Travel Services is based, their VIP clients are brought to the airport in a Mercedes-Benz van decked out with a 32-inch television that plays a personalized video detailing their upcoming trip. Signature suites, top guides, and airport escorts are par for the course, all the product of understanding how to maximize every experience for people with limited time.

FEE \$250.
CONTACT Strong Travel Services, Dallas; 214/361-0027; jim@strongtravel.com.

Valerie Wilson

KNOWN FOR Wilson runs one of the country's most prestigious agencies, sits on half a dozen corporate travel advisory boards, and just reissued a guide to the world's best hotels (to be published in November and sold on Amazon), but her calling card is still *hardworking* agent. She's more than willing to pick up the phone herself to ensure that her clients' needs are met, whether that means getting a hotel upgrade or snagging a hard-to-book restaurant reservation.

FEE \$200.
CONTACT Valerie Wilson Travel, New York City; 212/532-3400; valerie@vwti.com.

Joel A. Zack ✓

KNOWN FOR Experiential itineraries that get at the heart of the communities that make a destination. South Africa, Spain, Portugal, Morocco, and Turkey are the pillars of his company, Heritage Tours Private Travel. Activities run the gamut, from cooking lessons at Babylonstoren, in the Cape Winelands, South Africa, to exploring religious architecture in Morocco.

FEE None.
CONTACT Heritage Tours Private Travel, New York City; 800/378-4555; joel@htprivatetravel.com.