

AUTUMN/WINTER 2012

INESSENCE

THE ESSENTIALS OF THE GOOD LIFE

CLEAR SAILING

LUXURY YACHTING
IN THE CARIBBEAN

PARIS BY NUMBERS

THE DELIGHTS
OF EVERY DISTRICT

THE FUNKY WORLD OF ANNA SUI


STYLE THAT ROCKS
FROM A U.S. DESIGNER



International Herald Tribune
THE GLOBAL EDITION OF THE NEW YORK TIMES

INESSENCE

BESPOKE RESIDENCES BY FAR EAST ORGANIZATION



CUSTOM TRIP
PLANNERS CAN
MAKE THE MOST
EXTRAVAGANT AND
IDIOSYNCRATIC
DREAMS COME TRUE

OVER-THE-TOP TRAVEL

For a new wave of trip planners who custom-tailor holidays for discerning clients around the globe, the new credo is, “Your wish is my command.” These bespoke experiences can range from a week of high-fashion fittings in Paris or London to luxury box seats for mega sporting events like World Cup soccer to a private African safari, documented by a nature filmmaker.

Although they perform many of the same functions as traditional travel agents, they would probably prefer to call themselves travel “arrangers.” Because this is what they do: arrange extraordinary vacation experiences that at first glance seem impossible or much too complicated for most people to make happen on their own. But, in a way, they are also artists, for no small amount of creativity goes into many of these exclusive experiences.

Frosdick of London has created an over-the-top London experience called Million Dollar Dandy. Billed as a decadent slice of English high society, the week includes fittings for a personalized wardrobe comprising 14 Savile Row suits, 28 dress shirts and complementary silk ties from Jermyn Street, 14 pairs of shoes and boots, and

a selection of luxurious smoking jackets and silk dressing gowns.

Also included is a one-off wood wardrobe created by Viscount Linley, the Queen of England’s custom-furniture-making nephew. On top of all of this, clients can order a bespoke motorcar — ranging from an Aston Martin sports car to an armored SUV — with an interior that matches their Savile Row threads.

NO SMALL AMOUNT OF CREATIVITY GOES INTO MANY OF THESE EXCLUSIVE EXPERIENCES

“Million Dollar Dandy was created to meet the demands of high-net-worth individuals who lead extremely busy lives, either earning money or wanting to enjoy money in an ever more opulent manner,” says the experience creator David Frosdick.

Although most of his clients wish to remain

anonymous, Frosdick says they are primarily the superwealthy, living in the Middle East, Russia, China, Southeast Asia and Europe. One name he is willing to divulge is the late Tetra Pak heiress Eva Rausing who, he says, “spent almost \$500,000 on a bespoke shoulder bag created from exotic kudu hide with 24-karat gold fittings and a matching bespoke coin purse.”

Brown + Hudson creates bespoke trips on all seven continents. Each journey is meticulously crafted in consultation with the client. The trips can have a geographical focus — a particular country or region — or revolve around set themes: active, culinary, cultural, family, wellness, wildlife and wine. Or they can be constructed around the individual’s dreams, needs or secret passions. In other words, the sky’s the limit.

“Most people are strangely surprised that we value our craftsmanship and ethos as much as we do,” says the company’s founder, Philippe Brown. “The creative thought and planning that go into tailor-made experiences take time — huge amounts of time and care. The rich cultural textures, colorful characters and experiential contrasts that are fundamental to our trips are intelligently and meticulously planned.”



PHOTO: MICHELLE VALBERG



PHOTO: LION SANDS



PHOTO: HELIWORKS QUEENSTOWN HELICOPTERS



PHOTO: OVON HOLZING

BESPOKE EXPERIENCES

Whether it's one-of-a-kind lodgings, hard-to-reach destinations or custom-tailored experiences created from scratch, premium trip planners deliver.

Founder
Philip Brown
of Hudson +
Brown.

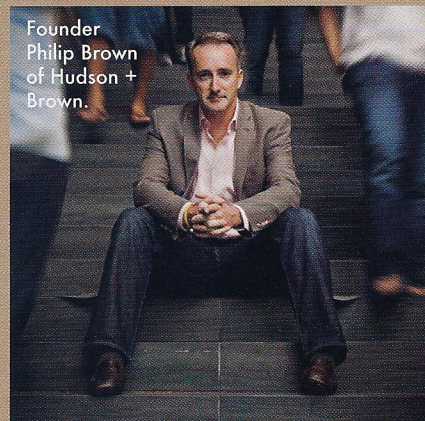


PHOTO: BROWN + HUDSON

RUBBING SHOULDERS WITH THE STARS

It's possible to arrange private meetings or meals with sports icons, rock stars, political leaders and Nobel Prize winners while visiting their home countries.

Hudson + Brown arranged tea with the Nobel Prize winner and international human-rights advocate Bishop Desmond Tutu for a couple with an interest in South African history and politics. The same trip included lunch with the Olympic gold-medal-winning swimmer Ryk Neethling and a shark-cage diving session with the renowned "great white" expert Chris Fallows.

Although competing athletes are difficult to pin down because of their training and game schedules, Roadtrips has had success arranging meetings for clients with famous former athletes and those who have finished their events. For instance, the company set up breakfast with an American family and two U.S. gold-medal swimmers after the swimming competition at the recent London Games.

Rock'n'Roll Fantasy Camps offer a whole different riff on celebrity encounters: a chance for clients to jam with the likes of the rockers Gene Simmons, Roger Daltrey, Steven Tyler and Slash at events in the United States, Britain and the Bahamas.

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Their trips can be well out of the ordinary. For instance, Brown + Hudson crafted an East African safari carried out by private helicopter in the company of a famed wildlife filmmaker, Alan Root, who documented the entire trip in a bespoke movie just for the clients.

"We refuse to create anything standard or that they could have done themselves," Brown says. "That is a nonnegotiable. We won't jeopardize our brand values for the sake of winning new business. If we know that a certain budget or criteria are going to restrict the way we create our trips, then we do say no."

Exclusive access to famous sporting events is the forte at Roadtrips. Rather than a set package, the Canadian company lets clients create a personalized experience that includes not just tickets to an event, but also luxury hotels and dining, a daily recreation or physical fitness regime and other activities.

"At any event," says Jeff Wills, Roadtrips vice president of marketing, "we have people staying for various lengths of time at different hotels. Some people want a private car and driver every day. Some people want us to add side trips. Everyone is running on a different itinerary."

Only one thing is standard: "We sell travel the way that we want to travel," says Wills. "We don't want to be part of a group that's being led around. That's really our niche in the sports-travel industry."

Roadtrips' slate of events runs a broad gamut, from Wimbledon tennis and Formula One races to the Super Bowl, the Kentucky Derby and the British Open golf tournament. Roadtrips is already creating trips for the 2014 World Cup and Winter Olympics. It also offers non-event trips, like Porsche and Ferrari driving experiences.

Wills says the Monaco Grand Prix is one of Roadtrips' most glamorous events each year and the one that generates the most special requests. "We had some clients who wanted to party where the drivers party after the race," he says. "So we were able to get them bottle service in a V.I.P. area of a very exclusive club where the drivers hang out. This year, we had a client who wanted a helicopter transfer from the airport. But all of the luggage wouldn't fit in the helicopter, so we had to hire a second one on the spot just for their luggage. A large part of our job is just making those things happen."

Joe Yogerst