

# Montage

LIFE, WELL LIVED

SPRING 2018

## DAY TRIP: THE ROAD TO HANA

A ONE-DAY, OFF-THE-GRID  
EXPERIENCE NEAR  
MONTAGE KAPALUA BAY



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# ONE-OF-A-KIND LUXURY

Sweeping mountain views at Montage Deer Valley



# THE SKY MAY NOT BE THE LIMIT WITH THE RIGHT CONCIERGE TEAM PLANNING YOUR TRAVELS.

BY KATIE MCELVEEN

They've closed down ski mountains in Japan, convinced tennis greats to rally with their clients and persuaded movie stars to drop in for a birthday surprise. Luxury, comfort and exclusivity come together seamlessly when the world's best travel agents set out to make their client's dreams realities. Using their insider knowledge, unprecedented access and cultivated connections, these boutique travel businesses transform vacations into one-of-a-kind experiences where anything is possible.

## CREATING MOMENTS OF DELIGHT

With the right timing, anyone can score a reservation at the French Laundry, chef Thomas Keller's wildly popular Napa Valley restaurant. But getting Keller to close the restaurant so he and his entire team could cater a private dinner? That takes a specialist. Specifically, Stacy Fischer-Rosenthal, president of Fischer Travel, the eponymous luxury travel concierge company founded by her father Bill Fischer more than 50 years ago, persuaded Keller to participate. But that was just the beginning. Fischer-Rosenthal also convinced a cult winery, not open to the public, to host the affair. "Our clients have access to luxury that, until we create it, doesn't exist," the New York-based Fischer-Rosenthal explains. "By getting to know our clients and listening to their dreams and interests, we can create moments of true delight." Consider the client who wanted to host a pre-Edwardian era costume party during the height of "Downton Abbey"-mania. Fischer Travel hired the show's costume designer to bring actual garments from the show to New York and fit them to family members, found proper jewelry and located hair and makeup experts to finish the look. Fischer-Rosenthal also planned a birthday trip to Disney World for a 70-year-old that included unprecedented access to the park's underground warren of caverns and tunnels. "I think one of the more important things needing articulation is that exclusivity or luxury doesn't necessarily mean over-the-top expensive," Fischer-Rosenthal says. "It's all about rarity." ([fischertravel.com](http://fischertravel.com))

## EXPERIENCE IS THE NEW LUXURY

Ten years ago, New York-based husband-and-wife team Lia Batkin and Seth Kaplan launched their luxury travel and lifestyle company, In the Know Experiences, when they realized there was a whole new generation of young, savvy travelers looking for custom experiences. "In this day and age, experience is the new luxury," Batkin says. "Our clients want to live their dreams." And while In the Know Experiences has a reputation for being able to find tickets to sold-out events, Batkin says their real passion is collaborating with clients to



Left: Fischer Travel once planned a birthday trip to Disney World in Florida for a 70-year-old that included unprecedented access to the park's underground warren of caverns and tunnels. Right: In the Know Experiences closed down a ski mountain in Japan so a client could hold a private event. Below: Quintessentially Travel set up a tour of a family chateau in France for an art collector curious about the family collection.



build one-of-a-kind journeys that hit passion touchpoints. "They're the kinds of things you can't Google," she says. "We arranged a small movie premiere that included all of the actors and the director for one client; pulled together a mini Coachella with top bands, food stands staffed by their favorite chefs and custom glamping tents for another, and closed down a ski mountain in Japan so a client could hold a private event." One of Batkin's favorite success stories was for a client who is a huge fan of The Allman Brothers Band. "His fantasy was to perform with them," she says. "We set it up so that if he spent the time to learn their songs, they'd let him on stage with them. It took a year, but it all came together and he was thrilled." (intheknowexperiences.com)

#### RESOURCE RICH, TIME POOR

Quintessentially Travel is the sister company of Quintessentially, a members-only lifestyle management and concierge club. Kelly Grumbach, who runs the company's travel group, says the

power of the Quintessentially brand is the seamless coordination between home and travel.

"Our clients are resource rich but time poor, so they need their vacations to be totally stress free," Grumbach explains. "And that includes knowing everything at home is handled." Beyond arranging inspiring explorations like setting up a tour of a family chateau in France for an art collector with a special interest in the family's collection and planning a North Pole to South Pole motorcycle adventure for two couples, Quintessentially Travel prides itself on making a destination as accessible as possible for clients. "Instead of writing off a destination because of cultural customs, we alter the destination," Grumbach says. "We've made restaurants kosher, re-staffed historic sites with all female guides and picked up luggage from a client so she could take the safari portion of her trip with one small bag without relegating herself to a single suitcase for the entire multi-city trip. Her luggage was waiting at her next hotel after the safari." (quintessentiallytravel.com)



#### MEMBERS ONLY

Of course, all that coordination comes at a cost. Quintessentially Travel's planning service fee is waived for members of Quintessentially; clients of In the Know Experiences pay a per-trip fee that's based on the number of people and destinations involved, complexity of arrangements and subcontractors. Fischer Travel, which has an unlisted phone number, works with members who pay an initiation fee and yearly dues. For clients, though, the benefits go well beyond experiencing a fabulous trip. Concierge travel planners ensure their safety and comfort with an on-the-ground network that can do everything from transporting luggage from one train platform to another to delivering forgotten passports to out-of-town airports and, when necessary, coming up with alternative plans on the fly. They're also discreet. "Some other super exclusive experiences we have arranged can't be spoken about," Fischer-Rosenthal says. "Confidentiality is crucial." **M**