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# Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

AUGUST 2013

## *DREAM CRUISES*

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**TURN THE PAGE FOR:**

1: Happy traveler Priscilla Eakeley's account of how a travel pro transformed her latest trip—to Chile and Argentina—from great to glorious.

2: Consumer News Director Wendy Perrin's personally vetted list of travel experts by their areas of expertise.

**NORTH AMERICA  
AND THE CARIBBEAN  
CENTRAL AND  
SOUTH AMERICA  
EUROPE  
THE MIDDLE EAST**

**AFRICA AND  
THE INDIAN OCEAN  
ASIA  
PACIFIC NATIONS  
CRUISES  
SPECIAL INTEREST  
SPORTS AND ADVENTURE**



## Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam

**G. W. "Sandy" Ferguson,**  
Asia Desk

A former resident of Thailand, Ferguson is known for his fabulous guides and savvy hotel choices. In Cambodia he can arrange for you to join the monks at a mountaintop temple for their pre-dawn prayers, and in Vietnam he can have you visiting the recently discovered largest cave on earth at Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park. Twelve-night minimum (800-667-4993; [cntrvtr.com/sandy](http://cntrvtr.com/sandy)).

## The Caucasus, Georgia, Kashmir, and Pakistan

**Jonny Bealby, Wild Frontiers**

Bealby plans trips that incorporate trekking, horseback riding, and white-water rafting and usually include introductions to his friends—nomads, carpet sellers, and even royalty. Incorporating everything from viewing dinosaur footprints and 22,000-foot peaks to sleeping in yurts and feasting on mutton stew cooked by shepherds, his itineraries are for the adventurous (44-20-7736-3968; [cntrvtr.com/jonny](http://cntrvtr.com/jonny)).

## China

**David Allardice,**  
Eastern Journeys

Allardice, a Hong Kong resident for the past 22 years, will get you to the most popular sights at optimal hours, as well as inside special areas that are off-limits to the masses. Your trip might include a lesson with a calligraphy master, a kite-making session in Beijing, or an invitation to a traditional wedding (852-2544-5488; [cntrvtr.com/davidallardice](http://cntrvtr.com/davidallardice)).

**Gerald Hatherly,**  
Abercrombie & Kent

Hong Kong-based Hatherly is a cultural encyclopedia, knows everyone who's anyone in China, has unrivaled clout that can make upgrades appear and lines disappear, and knows how to negotiate the big cities so efficiently that you'll have enough time for the lesser-known rural gems (852-2865-7818; [cntrvtr.com/gerald](http://cntrvtr.com/gerald)).

**Zhang Mei, WildChina**

Zhang, who is based in Beijing, has a vast network of in-country experts in nearly every field to introduce you to "authentic China." Her cultural connections run deepest in southwest China, where you might have tea with a shaman or camp in luxury mobile tents on the Tibetan Plateau (888-902-8808; [cntrvtr.com/zhang](http://cntrvtr.com/zhang)).



**SOARING SPLENDOR** In the days preceding western Mongolia's annual Golden Eagle Festival, Mongolia specialist Jalsa Urubshurow can arrange for you to stay with a hunter's family in a traditional ger, learning how the birds are trained to hunt and prepared for the festival before you watch them compete.

## India

**Victor Biswas, International Ventures and Travel**

Looking for luxury and old-world charm? Biswas, a native of India whose name is gold in his homeland, fills his itineraries with the sort of gracious touches—hard-to-book rooms in restored palace hotels or a meeting with Jaipur's top jeweler—that are available only through his countrywide network of connections (212-947-7075; [cntrvtr.com/victor](http://cntrvtr.com/victor)).

**Lucy Davison,**  
Banyan Tours & Travels

A Brit living in India, Davison loves bringing travelers into cultural moments that are ordinarily off-limits (weddings, school speech days, obscure festivals with costumed cows) and arranging surprises based on her clients' special interests—say, a private Sufi music performance for an aficionado (888-526-2217; [cntrvtr.com/lucy](http://cntrvtr.com/lucy)).

**Bertie and Victoria Dyer,**  
India Beat

Headed to Rajasthan, the temple- and art-rich region in the country's north? The Jaipur-based Dyers will appeal most to those who want to get outside the luxury hotel bubble and experience more of the real India. In Jaipur, Victoria leads clients on a shopper's dream tour of the gem markets and the best jewelry and silk boutiques (91-141-651-9797; [cntrvtr.com/bertieandvictoria](http://cntrvtr.com/bertieandvictoria)).

**India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Tibet**

**Sanjay Saxena,**  
Destination Himalaya

An army brat who grew up crisscrossing the Subcontinent, Saxena designs adventure-

packed itineraries that will appeal to a would-be Indiana Jones, filled as they are with under-the-radar destinations and unusual experiences: white-water rafting in Tibet or touring an elephant orphanage in Sri Lanka (800-694-6342; [cntrvtr.com/sanjay](http://cntrvtr.com/sanjay)).

**Japan**  
**Nancy Craft,**  
Esprit Travel & Tours

Craft's itineraries focus on art and culture—clients get to meet master craftsmen such as silk weavers, textile artisans, and ceramists—and she has savvy suggestions for where to scrimp so that you can splurge in the right spots (800-377-7481; [cntrvtr.com/nancy](http://cntrvtr.com/nancy)).

**Duff Trimble,**  
Wabi-Sabi Japan

Trimble has strong ties at the most luxurious and authentic ryokans, the best kaiseki restaurants, and the chicest art galleries. His specialty is connecting travelers with notable figures who ordinarily don't meet with visitors—including a fourteenth-generation sake maker, a fifth-generation potter, and a monk whose family have been caretakers of a Buddhist temple for 500 years (647-477-1711; [cntrvtr.com/duff](http://cntrvtr.com/duff)).

**Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**

**Zulya Rajabova,**  
Silk Road Treasure Tours

Born and raised in Uzbekistan, Rajabova spent eight years with the Uzbek Tourism Ministry, escorting the likes of Mesdames Clinton, Albright, and Putin through Silk Road cities. Now based in the United States, she can arrange everything

from visits to artisans' workshops in centuries-old caravansaries to invitations to village weddings (908-719-7676; [cntrvtr.com/zulya](http://cntrvtr.com/zulya)).

## Mongolia

**Jalsa Urubshurow,**  
Nomadic Expeditions

Urubshurow, who has an office in Ulaanbaatar, recommends traveling within the country by four-wheel drive and horse rather than by air—to better appreciate the vast, unspoiled landscapes—staying in gers and ecolodges, and stopping en route to explore dinosaur digs with leading paleontologists (800-998-6634; [cntrvtr.com/jalsa](http://cntrvtr.com/jalsa)).

## Nepal

**Antonia Neubauer,**  
Myths and Mountains

Neubauer's network of friends in Nepal give travelers intimate experiences of the local culture, such as an audience with a "living goddess" or visits to homes and artists' workshops. You'll get an especially warm welcome because Neubauer is the founder of READ Global, a renowned nonprofit that has built dozens of libraries/community centers in the country (800-670-6984; [cntrvtr.com/antonia](http://cntrvtr.com/antonia)).

## North and South Korea

**Walter Keats,**  
Asia Pacific Travel, Ltd.

He's been to North Korea more than 25 times and can get travelers into the Arirang Mass Gymnastics and Artistic Performance and make sure you see the DMZ from both sides. In South Korea, Keats will provide detailed self-drive routes, with stops in the most colorful ancient villages (800-262-6420; [cntrvtr.com/walter](http://cntrvtr.com/walter)).

## Philippines

**Lorenzo Urra, Global Nomad**

Urra has visited more than 300 of his home country's 7,107 islands. He'll send you to secret spots such as the untouched white sand beaches of Palawan or a colonial-era village where you can help fishermen pull in their nets. He can even have you kayaking with wild dolphins in aquamarine lagoons or visiting President Marcos's ancestral home and mausoleum (852-2159-9133; [cntrvtr.com/lorenzo](http://cntrvtr.com/lorenzo)).

## Sri Lanka

**Miguel Cunat,**  
Sri Lanka in Style

Cunat lives in Sri Lanka, has explored every corner—from the tea plantations to the national parks—and enjoys connecting travelers to his artist and historian friends (94-11-239666; [cntrvtr.com/miguel](http://cntrvtr.com/miguel)).