

TRUTH IN TRAVEL

CONDÉ NAST

JUNE 2015

# Traveler



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CASE STUDY 4: THE SPECIALIST AS TIME-MAXIMIZER

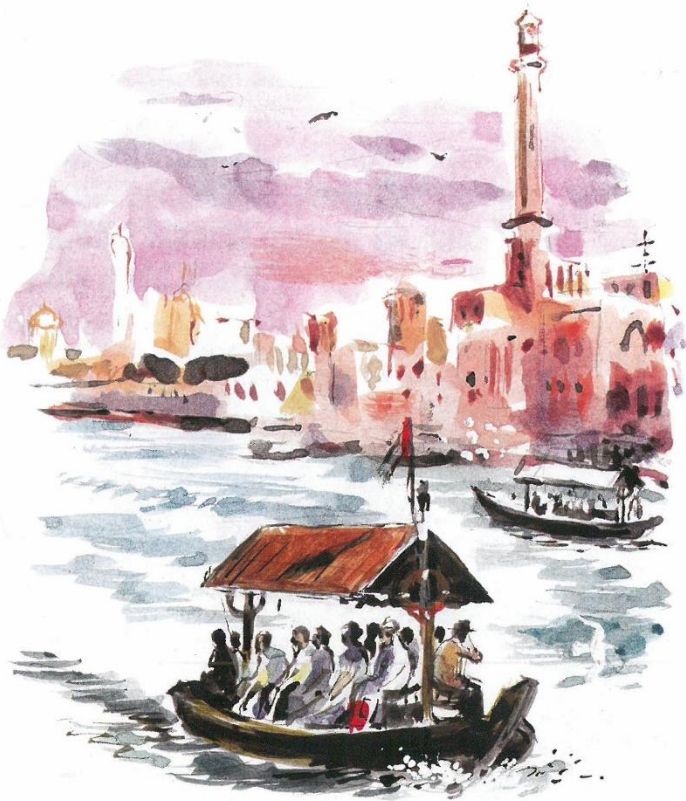
## “We’ve got only 12 hours to see Dubai.”

*Kay Hartzell, a retired Coast Guard commander now living in Maryland, on how her go-to specialist made the most of a lengthy layover in the Middle East.*

“We’d taken a cruise to Australia and New Zealand, and our flights were on Emirates, so coming back, we went from Melbourne through Dubai to D.C. We had a long layover in Dubai, and we figured we could take the rapid-rail in from the airport. I’ve worked with Linda Allen at Cruises by Linda for 20-plus years, so we talk a lot. Toby Snyder, in Linda Allen’s office, said, ‘Let me look into this.’ The tour guides were right there to pick us up, and we spent the entire day in Dubai. We went to the spice market and the gold shops, and took a cruise on the

creek in a water taxi that went from the old city to the new part, where we saw the high-rises. Then they got us back to the airport—it was seamless. Our luggage was checked through to D.C., so we didn’t even have to deal with that. It was such a neat way to get a taste of the city.”

**THE FIXER:** Linda Allen of Cruises by Linda specializes in getting as much out of your vacation as possible. She is an expert on big-ship cruises—where the best cabins are and what to do onshore (cruisesbylinda.com).



## HOUSE HUNTERS TO THE RESCUE

There are times when a hotel won’t work—like when you’re traveling with the kids and the in-laws, or venturing to locales where accommodations are scarce. A villa specialist with the right sensibility is the key to finding your fantasy home away from home.

**We’re off to:** Tuscany.

**The property to book:** Villa d’Orcia, a sprawling *casa colonica* in the Val d’Orcia area, renovated to slick perfection by Roman designer Ilaria Miani, with nine en suite bedrooms and 10,000 square feet of terraces surrounded by burnished gold hills.

**Who can get it for you:** Emily Fitzroy at Bellini (bellinitravel.com).

**We’re off to:** Marrakech.

**The property to book:** Riad Joya. It’s normally a seven-suite *riad* hotel, but it can be bought out for exclusive use. The original carved-wood *menzeh* windows are lined in white linen curtains (just as you imagined they’d be), and there’s even an on-site hammam and a house chef.

**Who can get it for you:** Michael Diamond at Heritage Tours Private Travel (htprivatetravel.com).

**We’re off to:** Mustique.

**The property to book:** Sunrise, a five-bedroom plantation-style home with doors that open onto its own private strand next to the island’s famous Macaroni Beach.

**Who can get it for you:** Nick Westwood at Red Savannah (redsavannah.com).

**We’re off to:** The Irish countryside.

**The property to book:** Luggala, owned by descendants of the Guinness family and awash in Irish history. It’s set on 5,000 lakeside acres in County Wicklow: There are emerald mountains and azure lakes outdoors, and wildly ornate interiors and roaring fireplaces indoors.

**Who can get it for you:** Siobhán Byrne Learat at Adams & Butler (353-1-288-9433).

**We’re off to:** Greece.

**The property to book:** We can’t really say. Ileana von Hirsch of Five Star Greece guards her ultra-exclusive villas—whitewashed aeries on more low-fi islands like Paxos or Skopelos. Describe your fantasy rental, from color palettes to kitchen dimensions, and she’ll make a match from hundreds of properties across 30 islands (fivestargreece.com).