

# Condé Nast Traveler

TRUTH IN TRAVEL // AUGUST 2013

Presenting . . . **WENDY PERRIN'S 14TH ANNUAL**

## 146 Top Travel Specialists

**WHO CAN SNAG YOU A ROOM AT  
THE FULLY BOOKED HOTEL SALTO CHICO IN  
PATAGONIA OVER NEW YEAR'S? ONE  
OF PERRIN'S PEOPLE CAN, THAT'S WHO!**

### Perrin's People

#### **THE PROS TO TURN TO WHEN A TRIP HAS TO BE PERFECT**

The custom trip designers collected here represent the best blend of destination knowledge, insider connections, consumer advocacy, and value for your dollar that I've found in more than two decades of scrutinizing the travel industry for this magazine. They have the expertise and clout to get you the rooms with the best views and the savviest English-speaking guides, not to mention

VIP perks. They have almost all been road-tested by *Condé Nast Traveler* readers, editors, or both. Of the more than 10,000 travel agents and tour operators who have tried to break onto this list since its inception 14 years ago, only a tiny fraction have made the grade—this year, 146 specialists. Getting into this group is, statistically speaking, tougher than getting into Harvard. Staying on it is tougher still: It requires not only an absence of valid reader complaints but also ongoing positive assessments.

**Not sure which specialist to contact?** When you don't have a specific destination in mind—or you're headed to a dozen in the same trip—you may need help from someone who knows the

whole world: a generalist rather than a specialist. In that case, call one of the superstar generalists with the **■** icon: They're well-connected with luxury hotels and travel companies and can provide a seamless itinerary with VIP treatment. Or, if you're still unsure or are planning a trip to multiple destinations, feel free to e-mail me at [perrinfeedback@condenasttraveler.com](mailto:perrinfeedback@condenasttraveler.com) for my suggestions.

**We invite you to peruse the reviews of these travel planners**—posted by your fellow *Condé Nast Traveler* readers returning

from trips booked through them. Find a full list of specialists at [condenasttraveler.com/travel-specialists](http://condenasttraveler.com/travel-specialists), and click through to their individual profile pages to read the critiques. We hope you'll want to help your fellow readers by posting your own review once you return from a trip one of them has arranged. If you'd rather comment privately, or if you'd like to nominate someone new for consideration, e-mail me.

*Bon voyage!*

—WENDY PERRIN

## WHEN TO USE A TRAVEL SPECIALIST

Contact the listed consultants not for the lowest price but for the best travel experience for your money. Only on certain types of trips will they add enough dollar value to make up for their cost. First, determine whether you're better off using their services or making the arrangements yourself. As a rule of thumb: If you have more money than time, hire one; if you have more time than money, don't.

### DO HIRE A SPECIALIST FOR...

- Highly personalized multi-day itineraries
- Once-in-a-lifetime splurges involving four- or five-star hotels
- English-speaking guides and drivers
- Special access to monuments, events, or people
- Cruises with private shore excursions

### DON'T HIRE A SPECIALIST FOR...

- The least expensive trip possible
- Elements that a concierge could easily arrange, such as a simple day tour or a restaurant reservation
- B&Bs or run-of-the-mill hotels (such as those of a mid-priced chain)

—W.P.

## SPECIAL INTEREST

### Business Travel

#### Jennifer Wilson-Buttigieg, Valerie Wilson Travel

Wilson-Buttigieg specializes in making arrangements for board-of-directors meetings and high-end incentive groups. She has clout with airlines and an array of hotel companies, and is savvy about business-travel niceties: airport club lounges, hotel concierge floors, and time-sensitive drivers who know all the short-cuts (212-592-1210; [cntrvlr.com/jennifer](http://cntrvlr.com/jennifer)).

### Family Travel

#### Kimberly Wilson Wetty, Valerie Wilson Travel

Seeking a stress-free, top-of-the-line getaway with your tots or tweens? Wetty, who's taken her two young children to many luxe resorts in the U.S., Europe, and the Caribbean, designs trips that minimize parents' frustrations while maximizing the benefits for the kids (212-592-1218; [cntrvlr.com/kimberly](http://cntrvlr.com/kimberly)).

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