

## Jennifer Wilson-Buttigieg

co-owner and co-President of one of the largest and longest-established travel consulting firms in the US – Valerie Wilson Travel, talks to TheInsider....

**Q. Jennifer, in this year's ILTM Ultratravel Forum you will be debating how have the demands of the luxury traveller changed, could you give us some insight into your thoughts on this?**

**Timeliness** – deliver what the client wants when and how they want it. It is no longer just a 24/7 world - luxury travelers want to have ultimate choice over options, advice, opinions, etc. They want a trusted travel advisor who truly knows their likes, dislikes and understands what they are looking for in each different experience. Walk away – serve the client when and how they want!

**Lack of time** – the reality is that time is precious. Clients want you as their travel advocate to understand their needs, wants, desires for luxury, adventure, culture, restaurants, behind the scenes options, giving back to places visited, etc. It is invaluable to provide 'correct and tailored' information and experience – if you do not, someone else will.

**Providing advice and validate their research** – knowing that luxury travelers check information online, have their own thoughts, and their friends' perspectives, and as a professional travel counselor, you have to know your luxury traveler and guide them.

**Q. You have been a regular buyer at ILTM, why is attending important to you?**

This will be my 6th consecutive year at ILTM - the key factor for me is it is always a professional setting for learning and meeting new suppliers and vendors. It is a way to see preferred partners and thank them personally. But the most important asset for me is seeing firsthand what is 'in', 'hot' and similarly, what is not! It is a fabulous venue for owners, managers, seasoned agents and newcomers – as it is an invaluable networking opportunity.

Please visit [www.iltm.net/forum](http://www.iltm.net/forum)



Image: Jennifer Wilson-Buttigieg of Valerie Wilson Travel

**Q. What are you particularly looking for at this year's ILTM?**

As always, it is finding the new hidden gems of travel suppliers from around the world. Even though Valerie Wilson Travel, Inc. is a large and well known international luxury travel company and brand, there are new hotel properties, on-sites, technology companies, private cruise, tour operators etc. that cannot visit NYC, so ILTM allows both the buyer and supplier the ability to meet! I focus on meeting new people and learning about new companies.

**Q. Which markets in particular are growing for US luxury travellers?**

Europe is back, Asia is in and the Middle East is still hot. South Africa and safaris are still a must. We find yachts, villas, and privacy to be very popular for the luxury couple or a multi generational trip. For me personally, it is seeing a place for the first time or before it changes too much!

**Q. What type of experiences are they looking for?**

Customized! Unique! Tailored to them by travel professionals that know them! Understanding the needs, time frame and goals of any trip to match up their individual experiences. ■