

Conde Nast Traveler Names 2017 Top Travel Specialists

Condé Nast Traveler

By  [James Shillinglaw](#), Nov 17, 2017, ([post a comment](#))



Two months after Travel+Leisure named its top travel specialists, Conde Nast Traveler (CNT) has done the same, with a list of travel agents and destination management companies (or inbound operators) focused by destination and specialty. CNT was a pioneer in publishing this list, originally developed by former CNT consumer editor Wendy Perrin (who now publishes her own list on her website).

We've always thought these lists were great for the travel agency profession, since they showcased the fact that there are still great, knowledgeable travel professionals in the market. Of course, the one challenge is these lists still mix apples and oranges, since they are a compilation of traditional travel advisors and destination-specific experts.

Traditional advisors usually can book their clients through these destination experts or choose tour operators or wholesalers. But this year's CNT list is made up primarily of destination experts, not traditional travel agents. Not that there's anything wrong with destination experts. We know many of the ones select on CNT's list and they are true experts in their destinations offering great advice and curated trips.

On the other hand, both the CNT and T+L lists remain extremely subjective and often don't seem to change all that much. They are also sometimes very similar to each other, with the same experts getting recognized again and again. Not that there isn't anything wrong with that, but it would be nice to see some new faces in the mix, since they are out there.

With all that said, here are the travel experts, by destination and specialty, that CNT has recognized this year. You'll need to go to CNT's website or pick up its December edition to discover its rationale for the selections:

AFRICA & THE MIDDLE EAST

Central, Eastern and Southern Africa: Cherri Briggs Explore, Inc.; Michael Lorentz, Passage to Africa; Henrietta Loyd, Cazenove + Loyd; Mark Nolting, The Africa Adventure Company; Nina Wennersten and Daniel Saperstein, Hippo Creek Safaris

Eastern Africa: Linda Friedman, Custom Safaris; Wil Smith and Karen Zulauf, Deeper Africa

Egypt: Rami Girgis, Abercrombie & Kent

Ethiopia: Will Jones, Journeys by Design

Iran and Tunisia: Jerry Sorkin, Iconic Journeys

Israel: Susan Weissberg, Wyllys Professional Travel; Joe Yudin, Touring Israel

Morocco: Michael Diamond, Cobblestone Private Travel; Mike Korn

Heritage Tours

Oman: Sean Nelson, Oman Expeditions

Southern Africa: Dan Achber, Trufflepig; Deborah Calmeyer, Roar Africa; Julian Harrison, Premier Tours; Ryan Hilton, AuthentEscapes; Teresa Sullivan, Mango African Safaris; Phoebe Weinberg, Greatways Travel

ASIA

Bhutan: Brent Olson, GeoEx

Bhutan, India and Nepal: Antonia "Toni" Neubauer, Myths and Mountains

Cambodia: Andy Booth, AboutAsia

Central Asia: Zulya Rajabova, Silk Road Treasure Tours

China: Gerald Hatherly, Abercrombie & Kent; Mei Zhang, WildChina

The Himalayas: Sanjay Saxena, Nomadic Expeditions

India: Lucy Davison, Banyan Tours & Travels; Bertie and Victoria Dyer, India Beat

India & Pakistan: Jonny Bealby, Wild Frontiers

Indonesia: Diane Embree, Bali Barong Tours

Japan: Nancy Craft, Esprit Travel & Tours

The Maldives: Lindsey Wallace, Linara Travel

Mongolia: Jalsa Urubshurow, Nomadic Expeditions

Myanmar: Tyler Dillon, Trufflepig; Maximilian Horsley, Arakan Travel

Southeast Asia: April Cole and Andrea Ross, Journeys Within Tour Company; G. W. "Sandy" Ferguson, Asia Desk; Catherine Heald, Remote Lands; Melissa Matthews, Red Savannah

Vietnam: Nathan Lane, Butterfield & Robinson

AUSTRALIA & THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Australia: Drew Kluska, The Tailor; Pedro O'Connor, Epic Private Journeys; Stuart Rigg, Southern Crossings

Fiji & Papua New Guinea: Lynette Wilson, Destination World

New Zealand: Donna Thomas, New Zealand Travel; Trevor Thomas, Southern Crossings

South Pacific Islands: Kleon Howe, The Art of Travel

CENTRAL & SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina: Maita Barrenechea, Mai 10

Argentina, Chile & Colombia: Harry Hastings, Plan South America

Argentina, Chile & Peru: Jordan Harvey, Knowmad Adventures

Bolivia & Peru: Marisol Mosquera, Aracari

Brazil: Martin Frankenberg, Matueté; Paul Irvine, Dehouche; Jill Siegel, South American Escapes

Chile: Brian Pearson, Upscape

Colombia: Boris Seckovic, Amakuna

Costa Rica: Irene Edwards, GreenSpot Travel

Costa Rica, Nicaragua & Panama: Pierre Gedeon, Nicaragua Adventures

Ecuador & Peru: Tom Damon, Southwind Adventures

EUROPE

Central Europe: Gwen Kozlowski, Exeter International; Ellison Poe, Poe Travel

Croatia: Wanda S. Radetti, VisitCroatia.com

France: Anthony Bay, Anthony Bay Is Europe; Pascale Bernasse, French Wine Explorers

Germany: Marion Harbison, Brownell Travel

Greece: Mina Agnos, Travel2Greece by Travelive; Ronnie Liadis, Liadis Travel; Leftheris Papageorgiou, Hellenic Adventures; Christos Stergiou, TrueTrips

Iceland: Chris Gordon, Icepedition

Ireland: Geraldine Murtagh, Elegant Ireland, Kathleen Sheridan, McCabe World Travel

Italy: Brian Dore and Maria Gabriella Landers, CIU Travel; Andrea Gridale, IC Bellagio; Adamarie King, Connoisseur's Travel; Gary Portuesi, Authentic Italy; Rudston Steward, Trufflepig

The Netherlands: Harmina Mulder, The Travel Society

Portugal: Gonçalo Correia, Tours for You

Portugal & Spain: Virginia Irurita, Made for Spain & Portugal

Russia & Eastern Europe: Greg Tepper, Exeter International

Scandinavia: Jan Sortland, Norwegian Adventures

Scotland: Camilla Davidson, NoteWorthy; David Tobin, Dream Escape

Spain: Sebastian Lapostol, Trufflepig; Ally Lewing, Heritage Tours

Switzerland: Jack Shaw, Epic Europe

Turkey: Karen Fedorko Sefer, Sea Song Tours; Earl Starkey, Protravel International

United Kingdom: Nicola Butler, NoteWorthy; Jonathan Epstein, Celebrated Experiences; Jane McCrum, In Any Event Tours

NORTH AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN

American National Parks: Marty Behr, National Parks Revealed

American West: Caroline Bach Wood, Caroline Travel

Bermuda: Vicky McGlynn, Travelong of Summit

California Wine Country: Ania Gatto, Wine Country Concierge

Canada: Marc Têlio, Entrée Destinations

Cuba: Alison Coelho, InsightCuba; Michael Sykes, Cuba Cultural Travel

Mexico: Zachary Rabinor, Journey Mexico; Stephanie Schneiderman, Tia Stephanie Tours

Pacific Northwest: Sheri Doyle, Pacific Northwest Journeys

CRUISES

European Barge Cruises: Jill Jergel, Frontiers International Travel; Ellen Sack, The Barge Lady

Expedition Ships: Sharon Keating, Polar Cruises; Thomas Lennartz, Quark Expeditions; Ashton Palmer, ExpeditionTrips; Todd Smith, AdventureSmith Explorations; Tim Soper, EYOS Expeditions

Large Ships: Linda Allen, Cruises by Linda; Tom Baker, CruiseCenter

River Cruises: Richard Bruce Turen, Churchill & Turen

Small Ships: Leslie Fambrini, Personalized Travel Consultants; Mary Jean Tully

Tully Luxury Travel; Angela Turen, Churchill & Turen

Yacht Charters: Mary T. Crowley, Ocean Voyages

VILLAS

California Wine Country: Liza Graves, BeautifulPlaces

Caribbean: Tim Roney, LaCure

France: Erica Berman, Haven In; Gail Boisclair, Perfectly Paris; Nick Westwood, Red Savannah

France, Italy & Spain: Cédric Reversade and Paul-Maxime Koskas, Unique Properties & Events

France, Spain & United Kingdom: Adam Coats, Red Savannah

Greece: Ileana von Hirsch, Five Star Greece

Hawaii: Ryne Holliday, Hawaii Hideaways

Italy: Countess Simonetta Brandolini d'Adda, The Best in Italy; Chiara Guidi, Red Savannah; Patrice Salezze, Papavero Villa Rentals; Mara Solomon, Homebase Abroad

New Zealand: Jacqui Spice, Touch of Spice

St. Barts: Peg Walsh, St. Barth Properties

St. Martin & Sint Maarten: Sonja van der Drift, BlueOceanVillas

South America: Luisa Ladron de Guevara, Oasis Collections

Spain: Mary Vaira, El Sol Villas

United Kingdom & Ireland: Andrew Loyd, Loyd & Townsend Rose

Worldwide: Marina Gratsos, Carpe Diem Luxury Travel

SPECIAL INTEREST

Airline Assistance: Brett Snyder, Cranky Concierge

Destination Celebrations: Jack S. Ezon, Ovation Vacations

Destination Weddings: Harlan deBell and Kara Bebell, The Travel Siblings

Disney: Michelle Allen, Travel Magic

Family Travel: Kay Merrill, Are We There Yet? Family Adventures; Leslie Overton, Passported

Fly-Fishing: Mollie Fitzgerald, Frontiers International Travel

LGBTQ Trips: David Rubin, DavidTravel

Miles & Points: Gary Leff, Book Your Award

Over-the-Top Trips: Kate Doty, GeoEx; Kathy Obbish, Custom Safaris & Explorations

Scuba Diving: Meg Austin, The Travel Society

Wine: Larry Martin, Food & Wine Trails