

# PASSIONATE TRAVEL

*I'm not looking for my dreams to interpret my life...  
But rather for my life to interpret my dreams...* Susan Sontag

BY RANDI WINTER

**M**y stomach always knows first. It's that "If Mexican jumping beans could smile" feeling. Some call it anticipation, others excitement, and I must admit to also getting it every time I wake up in or arrive back to my new condo (see Virginia Leeming's cover article), but I know that I get that feeling precisely because it still feels like I am on vacation – after all I have waited 3 years for my Shangri-la by the water to be finished, and I have lived here less than 3 weeks! Why, I have travelled for far longer periods than that!

So, why do we travel anyway? Most people think the "where" is the beginning and end of choice, but if you develop the vocabulary to ask "why?", then a whole new world of travel possibilities unfolds.

The core reasons are basic, either to get away from where we are, or because we are drawn to somewhere or something. Beyond that, it is more complex – relax or recharge, romance or inspiration, learn or teach? Now, spice it up with your personal interests and hobbies, and you are tapping into PASSIONATE TRAVEL!

How do you know if you are a PASSIONATE TRAVELLER?

- You cannot imagine life without travel
- You don't go on trips but rather, anticipate experiences
- You appreciate the planning as much as the travel itself
- You enrich your travel experiences by integrating personal interests and hobbies
- You will always learn from every experience and life will never pass YOU by

For discerning individuals like yourself, travel is a way of life, and an integral part of your quality of life. Our passions dictate not whether we will travel but how to enrich our travel experiences individually or with family or friends. What is your personal passion? Culinary, art, architecture, sports, romance or cultural events? Serenity and seclusion or Mardi Gras? Do you like hotels large or small, hip or historic? Transport by air or land or sea?

## SHOULD I BE USING A TRAVEL SPECIALIST IF I RESEARCH ON THE INTERNET?

If you are looking for your travel to be a commodity, like your toaster, then after hours of research, price may be enough on which to base your plans. People find almost too much information, particularly if it is about more than lying by a pool or beach. If your objective is to experience cultures and counter-cultures, lifestyles and political or religious influences, then while you may find volumes of information, how are you supposed to be able to evaluate what you have found?

## WHY CONSIDER USING A TRAVEL SPECIALIST?

Fine chefs, artists and professionals take something basic and through their talent and skill create something extraordinary. The results are greater than the sum of its parts. You choose your doctor or lawyer by their reputation and ability to help you on a personal basis. It's why you spend more to buy art from a certain artist or eat at special restaurants. It is every travel specialist's mandate to ensure that you get the best value for your money. This may mean savings of thousands of dollars with upgrades or negotiated rates, or it may mean experiences you thought money could not buy. Expect to be charged a consultation fee for providing a value added service that offers no remuneration for the agent's time or expenses. Usually, benefits far outweigh these charges. Most travel agencies belong to consortiums that offer preferred relationships and benefits, so be sure to ask what it means to you. Remember that travel represents your greatest non-renewable resource – free time!

## WHAT YOU SHOULD TELL YOUR TRAVEL SPECIALIST

- What type of experience do you want? (romantic, unique, challenging, de-stress)
- Most important amenities- (bidet, jacuzzi, balcony, water

view, Room Service)

- Is this a special occasion?
- Any special needs, requests, or dietary restrictions (kosher, non-smoking, fridge in room for insulin or your favourite peanut butter)
- How much flexibility do you have/need/want? (early check-out, change dates for better rates, can I see the aurora borealis?)
- How much togetherness is too much? (shopping vs sports, workout vs veg out?)
- Should being involved with your interests be active, passive or both? (play sports vs watch sports vs learn a sport)
- What would really make this experience extra special (candles and flowers, sunset cruise, a trophy fish, learning something new, meeting Mr/Ms Right)?
- Preferred ambiance (casual, formal, funky or ethnic)
- Do you need computer hook-ups, fax service, voice mail?

### **THRIVING AHEAD OF THE PACK... BE IN THE FOREFRONT OF TRENDS IN TRAVEL INNOVATION**

It's not about price, but the priceless-ness of the experience!

Your journey starts here. Every issue, this space will be dedicated to inspire and challenge you to get more out of YOUR life. As you see, you do not have to go far, as we explore how to be a tourist in your own town, take a mental health break, or set your sights firmly on the more remote corners of the province. Interactive, authentic, hands-on experiences encompass many themes – adventure, agriculture, archaeology, arts, culture, cuisine, forestry, history, gardening, language, maritime, mining, nature, science, spirituality, sports, wine, wildlife... Are you brave enough to challenge yourself, or even braver to risk trying something new which changes existing roles? Be one of those lucky enough to know that most valuable experiences start with a dream and live forever, cherished in your memory. The world of travel is a world worth living... and here in BC we are exceptionally blessed with an embarrassment of riches, regardless of your interests or passions.

The hardest part of this article was choosing from so many wonderful BC niche companies of all sizes who know how to provide amazing customized experiences. Every other month, we will be exploring niche experiences like “The Discerning Cruiser”, “Trips for Men from Mars and Women from Venus”, “Teambuilding and Incentives - Your Secret Weapon for Corporate Success and Individual Fulfillment”, “A View from the Slopes”, “Charting your own Culinary Map - The Art of Food and Wine”, and much more. Please share your feedback and most cherished travel dreams and memories! Email me at [passionate-travel@novus-tele.net](mailto:passionate-travel@novus-tele.net) and tell your friends to check out the website [www.passionatetravel.com](http://www.passionatetravel.com) for hot updates in the world of Passionate Travel, including special events, preferred pricing and value added offerings. Look for special contests that can put you in the driver's seat of your own highway to travel heaven!