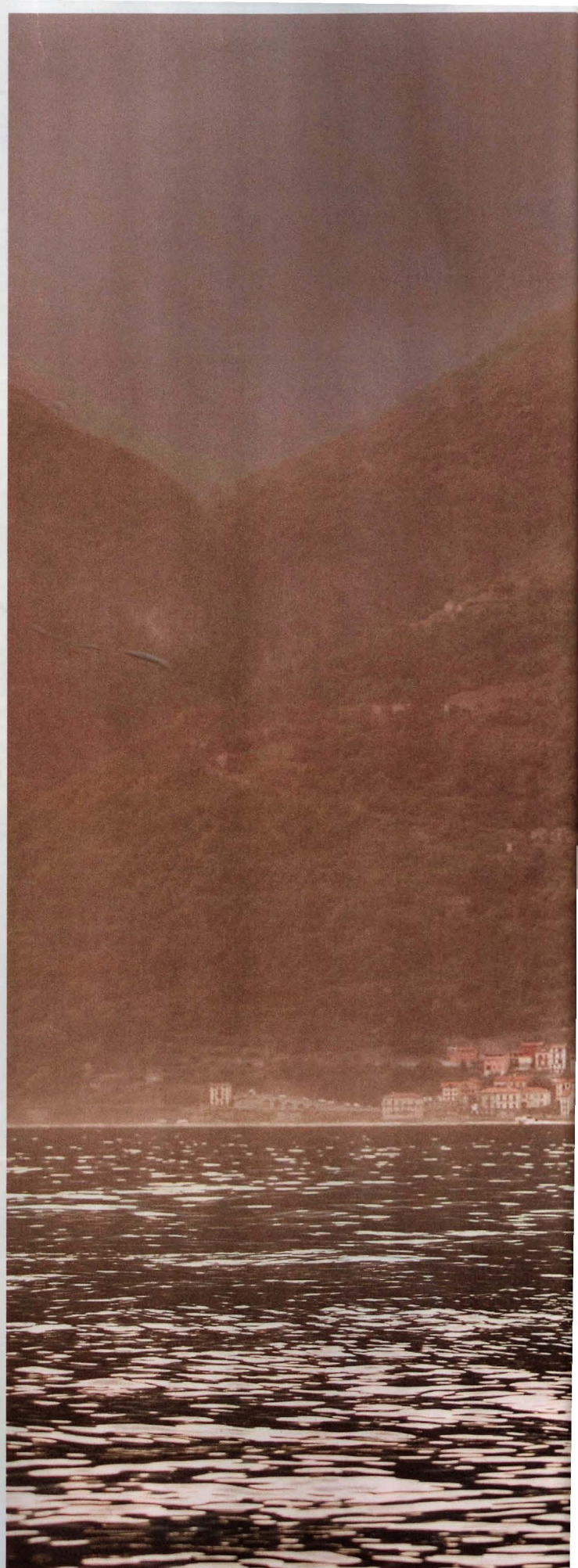


THE EDITORS' PICK

THE WORLD'S BEST TRAVEL SPECIALISTS 2019

Booking a trip with an exceptional travel adviser has huge upsides. They remove the burden of the niggling details (the visas, the transfers, the reservations), but far more than that, they have the insider knowledge, the prolific contacts, the exclusive access, and the sharp instincts to transform a vacation into an experience of a lifetime, whether it's tracking Siberian tigers in Russia's Far East or celebrating Day of the Dead in Michoacán. Here's a taste of *Condé Nast Traveler's* Top Travel Specialists for 2019: the agents and fixers, explorers and connoisseurs, historians and naturalists, instigators and hand-holders we most highly recommend. For the complete list of all 185 of our trusted experts, go to cntraveler.com/travel-specialists.

BY ALEX POSTMAN AND CHRISTINE CANTERA





WILL JONES

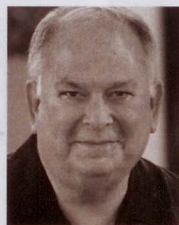
JOURNEYS BY DESIGN, ETHIOPIA AND NORTHERN KENYA

Raised in six African countries, Jones spent school holidays with famed paleoanthropologist Richard Leakey developing a fierce, and fiercely ethical, sense of adventure that shapes his wildly original itineraries for both the bold and the boldfaced. He's as likely to be found trekking into the cauldrons of Ethiopia's Danakil Depression (see page 90) and camping on the Omo River to visit the lip-plate wearing Surma as in the high-design lodges of Laikipia with Ralph Lauren's family. journeysbydesign.com

CHRISTOS STERGIU

TRUE TRIPS, GREECE

After growing up in Athens and Patmos, Stergiou completed his own odyssey, nabbing an M.B.A. from Stanford, then returning home to give visitors a luxe, intimate experience of unspoiled Greece. He can flag up that spot-on little taverna helmed by someone's *yia-yia* on the quiet side of Mykonos but has a boyish enthusiasm for the ancient stone villages and mythical mountain vistas of the Peloponnese. truetrips.com



RICHARD BRUCE TUREN
CHURCHILL & TUREN, RIVER CRUISES

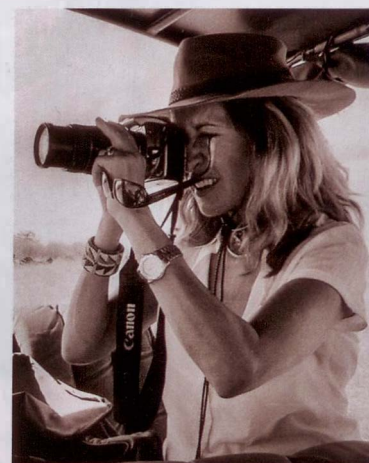
Turen can advise on nearly every ship on Europe's waterways—which have the smartest cabins or best food and wine, and which will take you past the most staggering castles or prettiest hidden villages.

traveltruth.com

CHERRI BRIGGS

EXPLORE, INC., CENTRAL, EASTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICA

Briggs once did a two-week *mokoro*-canoe trip across the Okavango and spent nine months solo exploring Tunisia and the Libyan desert. A female Livingstone with a perfect blowout, Briggs applies her thirst for discovery to her conservation-minded trips, be it horseback riding through Kenya's great plains or a heli drop-in to a five-star eco-resort in Madagascar. Based in Zambia, she brings clients like Gloria Steinem to support women entrepreneurs in local communities, creating deeply personal connections when and where the world needs them most. exploreinc.com



MEI ZHANG

WILDCHINA, CHINA



A gifted storyteller and author (*Travels Through Dali With a Leg of Ham*), Zhang is obsessed with foodie travel and relishes sending visitors in pursuit of regional specialties like traditional *rushan* cheese in Yunnan, or fiery *mapo* tofu in Chengdu. As a Chinese national based in the U.S., Zhang can access corners of the Middle Kingdom that are still impenetrable to many foreign agents, and her impressive roster of

contacts has helped her wrangle normally out-of-reach experiences, whether meeting with traditional Chinese Taoist practitioners in the Wudang Mountains, visiting restricted areas of the Mogao Caves, or dropping in at Ai Weiwei's private art studio. wildchina.com

FRANCES GEOGHEGAN

HEALING HOLIDAYS, MEDICAL SPAS AND RETREATS

Geoghegan is intensely passionate about wellness and the crucial role she plays in matchmaking the tired, the unfit, the stressed, and the burnt-out with the ideal program. She handpicks the best Austrian medi-spas and Thai yoga retreats, American heavy hitters and tiny (but deeply special) outfits with practitioners worth flying for. With her throaty laugh and Irish lilt, she makes clients—often vulnerable or unsure—feel at ease. No one gets a *panchakarma* purge they're not ready for. Highly reassuring. healingholidays.co.uk



THE SHOPPING HACK "FOR UNUSUAL TITLES IN BANGKOK, VISIT MY FRIEND SHANE SUVIKAPOKORNKUL'S BOOKSTORE, OPEN HOUSE." INTERIOR DESIGNER BILL BENSLEY