



THEY'RE THE ULTIMATE TRAVEL EXPERTS

The super-agents who can tell you the subtle differences between Amandari and Amankila, who know whether this is a better time to go on safari in Tanzania or Botswana, who can set up a private viewing of the Terracotta Army with a single phone call. For T+L's annual A-list, we've once again identified the country's top travel agents, and on the following pages listed them according to their area of expertise. (...)

Edited by Nathan Lump · Reported by David Jefferys and Shane Mitchell

Inside the A-List

THE PROCESS Agents included in the A-list were chosen based on careful evaluations of their experience, knowledge, and customer service. Individuals have been listed in the area of expertise in which we deemed them to be most knowledgeable.

THE AGENTS Many listed agents belong to the consortium Virtuoso or work for agencies owned by or affiliated with American Express, the parent company of this magazine. A few are members of T+L's travel agent advisory board.

THE FEES Most experienced agents now charge clients a fee for detailed custom trip-planning, which you are required to pay whether or not you actually book a trip. When an agent applies their fee to the cost of your trip, it is followed by an asterisk.

THE SURVEY *Travel + Leisure*, in conjunction with Beta Research, conducted an on-line poll in June 2003 of nearly 1,000 top travel agents across the country. We've highlighted our findings throughout the A-list.

THE A-LIST

125 Travel Super-Agents

A-LIST ALL-STARS

Meet the Über-super-agents. They can make anything happen, and really do know it all. They're also expensive, or inaccessible to all but the wealthiest clients—or both.

PALLAVI SHAH If you'd like the red-carpet treatment in India (or plenty of other places, for that matter), call Pallavi Shah: she knows everyone. Two recent examples of what Shah can arrange: an invitation to throw paint with Rajasthani royals at the festival of Holi, a kids' treasure hunt in the gardens of Rajvilas. An initial consultation is free—after that, Shah's undisclosed fee is bundled with the cost of your trip. *Our Personal Guest, New York, N.Y.; 212/319-1354; nyoffice@ourpersonalguest.com.*

A-List All-Stars

**Pallavi Shah**

A former special-events coordinator for Air India, Shah and her small team of agents specialize in elaborate itineraries that focus on "authentic experiences." Each client receives a comprehensive, personalized book with pertinent background information before departure. Shah doesn't disclose her fee—it's bundled into the total quoted cost of a trip—but having someone

track the tidal currents of the Ganges to maximize your temple-viewing boat trip certainly doesn't come cheap.

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A-List All-Stars

Pallavi Shah

Shah specializes in creating elaborate itineraries for super-wealthy clients, but lately she has been spinning off a new menu of experiences that all travelers can order "à la carte." She's also influencing the course of luxury travel: she's teaching tour operators in the Indian Himalayas how to cater to her high-end clientele. Be prepared to follow orders: all clients receive an information packet explaining their responsibilities to the locals. Her undisclosed fee is bundled into the price of the trip.

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ULTRA-LUXURY

Ultra-Luxury

AGENT	Pallavi Shah
SPECIALTY	Ultra-Luxury
KNOWN FOR	Creating elaborate itineraries for her super-wealthy clients, with no detail escaping her examination. Her own custom tour books, given to clients before departure, are part travel bibles, part collector's items.
DREAM TRIP	Listening to performances by musicians all along the Silk Road, particularly in Mongolia, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
CONSULTING FEE	Varies*
CONTACT INFO	Our Personal Guest, Inc New York, N.Y. 212/319-1354 nyoffice@ourpersonalguest.com

* Fee included in trip cost



Pallavi Shah

KNOWN FOR
Elaborate itineraries, with not a single detail—down to the bed linens—escaping her examination.

DREAM TRIP
A trek to the remote Himalayan region of Mustang, bordering Tibet.

CONSULTING FEE
Varies.

CONTACT INFORMATION
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A List All Stars 2008 The Top Travel Agents

Unexpected Luxury

Pallavi Shah

Known for: Elaborate itineraries. She preps her clients with plenty of reading materials, including sheaves of her own specialized travel advice for each trip.

Secret Find: The lakes of Italy's Piedmont, especially Lago d'Orta, a deep blue lake that the locals call Cinderella. On the tip of a peninsula on the lake's eastern shore is Orta San Giulio, a romantic little village with narrow cobblestoned streets. Life there revolves around two piazzas, which look directly onto Isola di San Giulio, a little island dominated by a 12th-century basilica.

Consulting Fee: Varies. **Contact:** *Our Personal Guest, Inc., New York, N.Y.; 212/319-1354; nyoffice@ourpersonalguest.com.*