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paleontologists. His itineraries—through areas with more pyramids than Egypt and twelfth-century rock-hewn churches still in use today—might include joining Dr. Richard Leaky on a dig or camel trekking through the desert with bedouins (44-1273-623-790; [cntrvrlr.com/will](http://cntrvrlr.com/will)).

### **Maldives, Mauritius, and Seychelles**

#### **Lindsey Wallace, Linara Travel**

Wallace has been to every four- and five-star resort on these islands, and his pull with the managers, concierges, maitre d's, sommeliers, spa directors, room butlers, and dive masters translates into savings and perks for you, from advantageous room locations to desert-island excursions (800-335-6033; [cntrvrlr.com/lindsey](http://cntrvrlr.com/lindsey)).

### **Morocco**

#### **Joel Zack, Heritage Tours Private Travel**

An expert on Moroccan architecture and historic preservation, Zack will help you dive into the culture inside the Casbahs—whether through a meeting with an art gallery owner or a visit to a villager's home—and, as much as he loves Marrakech's hot hotels and Fez's museums, will likely coax you out of the cities to the beaches of Essaouira or the ethereal High Atlas Range (800-378-4555; [cntrvrlr.com/joel](http://cntrvrlr.com/joel)).

### **Seychelles**

#### **Astrid Breuer, Island Splendor Vacations**

Seychelles native Breuer speaks all three local languages (English, French, and Creole)—which helps her negotiate hotel rates for her clients, whom she sometimes meets up with, since she lives on Praslin—and can point you beyond the popular Mahé hangouts and La Digue beaches to the less-touristy islands (818-707-0091; [cntrvrlr.com/astrid](http://cntrvrlr.com/astrid)).

### **Tunisia**

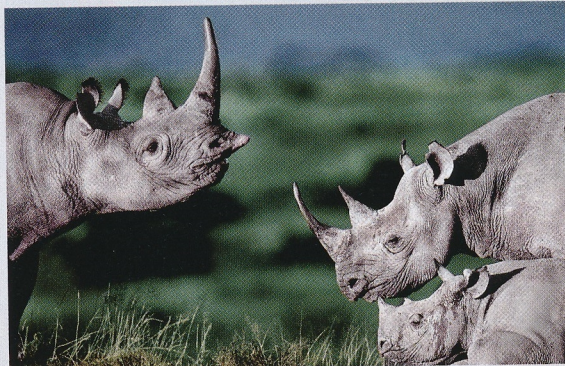
#### **Jerry Sorkin, TunisUSA**

Sorkin spends much of the year in Tunis (where he has an office) and designs trips that link sightseeing—including at excavations which are normally off-limits—with human connections between travelers and everyday Tunisians (888-474-5502; [cntrvrlr.com/jerry](http://cntrvrlr.com/jerry)).

### **Safaris: East Africa** **Linda Friedman, Custom Safaris**

Friedman, who speaks Swahili and has multiple offices in Kenya, can send you to the bottom of Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge (a.k.a. the Cradle of Mankind) with one of the site's curators or weave in meaningful cultural

**RHINO RUN-IN** Safari specialist Cherri Briggs can get you into the highly guarded rhino reintroduction sanctuary in Tanzania's Singita Grumeti, with a member of its famed anti-poaching team.



exchanges such as volunteering at a school or health clinic (866-530-1982; [cntrvrlr.com/linda](http://cntrvrlr.com/linda)).

### **Nina Wennersten and Daniel Saperstein, Hippo Creek Safaris**

Wennersten and Saperstein can orchestrate anything from walking with the Hadzabe people of Tanzania to tracking lions and leopards with a big cat expert in Botswana, but it's their candor, attention to the most minute details, skill at choosing intimate camps and lodges, and delivery of the most rewarding experience for your dollar that travelers love most (866-930-9124; [cntrvrlr.com/danandnina](http://cntrvrlr.com/danandnina)).

### **Safaris: Southern Africa** **Cherri Briggs, Explore**

Briggs, who has offices in Botswana and Zambia, applies environmental ethics in choosing accommodations, from classic mobile tented safaris to luxe lodges, and fosters client participation in community and wildlife projects. She'll have you photographing elephants at a hide in the moonlight or tracking lowland gorillas with the Ba'aka people (888-596-6377; [cntrvrlr.com/cherri](http://cntrvrlr.com/cherri)).

### **Julian Harrison, Premier Tours**

A former ranger who was born and raised in South Africa and co-authored *Fodor's African Safari*, Harrison knows where the animals are and where they aren't. His candor, sense of value, and ability to articulate the pros and cons of every park, lodge, and activity (he can even articulate them in Afrikaans and Zulu) ensure a transformative experience at a fair price (800-545-1910; [cntrvrlr.com/julian](http://cntrvrlr.com/julian)).

### **Phoebe Weinberg, Greatways Travel**

Looking to live large and combine the most celebrated (and

hard to get into) game-rich lodges and camps with a few sumptuous days in Cape Town and the wine country? Weinberg has pull with the properties, rooms, rangers, and guides best suited to your needs (313-886-4710; [cntrvrlr.com/phoebe](http://cntrvrlr.com/phoebe)).

### **Safaris for Families** **Ryan Hilton, Admiral Travel International**

A native Zimbabwean and former photo-safari guide with two pre-teens, Hilton knows which lodges provide kids-only game drives and have family suites; which guides are best for keeping children engaged (think spoor identification, watercolor paints, and poking about in anthills); and where you can use microphones to eavesdrop on the family "conversations" of a pod of hippos (941-536-0015; [cntrvrlr.com/ryan](http://cntrvrlr.com/ryan)).

### **Mark Nolting, Africa Adventure Company**

The author of *Africa's Top Wildlife Countries*, Nolting has been on a dozen safaris with his two teenage sons, so he's experienced at arranging adventures that appeal to a multi-generational family—think white-water rafting on the Zambezi, playing soccer with Masai schoolchildren, and crafting bows and arrows with Bushmen (800-882-9453; [cntrvrlr.com/mark](http://cntrvrlr.com/mark)).

## **Asia**

### **Bali**

#### **Diane Embree, Michael's Travel Centre**

Embree wants travelers to experience the hidden Bali that so many visitors miss. Her clients can learn to play with a village gamelan orchestra, undergo a purification ritual at a holy spring, create traditional masks in a workshop, or visit a village

medicine man (805-484-9393; [cntrvrlr.com/diane](http://cntrvrlr.com/diane)).

### **Bhutan**

#### **Brent Olson, GeoEx**

Olson, who has been to Bhutan 48 times, knows everyone from villagers to high-ranking government officials to members of the royal family. He gets his clients into places that remain unknown to most tourists—certain temples and monasteries and, in special cases, private festivals and prayer ceremonies (800-777-8183; [cntrvrlr.com/brent](http://cntrvrlr.com/brent)).

### **Burma**

#### **NEW Tyler Dillon, Butterfield & Robinson**

Dillon spends three months in Burma a year, guiding trips and forging close relationships with hoteliers and local leaders. His itineraries take travelers into small villages where they can get to know the country's phenomenally friendly people—perhaps via a monastery stay or tea with chieftains—and are best for active travelers, since the optimal way to get out into the countryside is via a hearty bike ride (800-768-1147; [cntrvrlr.com/tyler](http://cntrvrlr.com/tyler)).

### **William Myatwunna, Good News Travels**

Born in Rangoon and educated in Europe, Myatwunna is your key to this famously reclusive country as well as to its best drivers and translators, river cruises, mountain treks, bungalows at beachfront resorts, private tours of hill-tribe villages, and hot-air balloon rides above the ancient ruins of Bagan (951-372-227; [cntrvrlr.com/william](http://cntrvrlr.com/william)).

### **Cambodia**

#### **NEW Andy Booth, AboutAsia**

Booth's forte is steering travelers so as to avoid the infamous crowds at Angkor Wat. Equally impressive, though, are his offerings beyond the temple tours: biking the wall of Angkor Thom and through forests and rice paddies, kayaking a flooded forest followed by lunch in a riverside home, or a moonlit boat ride in the moat surrounding Angkor Thom (914-595-6949; [cntrvrlr.com/andy](http://cntrvrlr.com/andy)).

### **Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam**

#### **Andrea Ross, Journeys Within Tour Company**

Ross, who lived in Cambodia for ten years, often peppers itineraries with philanthropic elements, enabling travelers to engage with the local community. Her affordable rates make her a great option for travelers on a budget (877-454-3672; [cntrvrlr.com/andreaross](http://cntrvrlr.com/andreaross)).