



THE LITTLE LUXURIES IN LIFE

Founder of Little Guest Hotels Collection
JÉRÔME STÉFANSKI shares the secrets
to a fun family holiday

PHOTOS BY XXXXXXXX.



• **HOW DID YOU FALL IN LOVE WITH TRAVELING?**

15 years ago, I was a student and I did not have a lot of money for traveling. So I found the best deal ever: working as a Mini-Club animator for Club Med during my school holidays. It was a great chance to make new friends, discover cultures, and earn money. Above all, it gave me independence. A few years later, I founded a luxury magazine, which gave me the chance to explore and write about exclusive travel destinations and luxury hotels worldwide.

• **HOW HAS TRAVELING CHANGED YOUR LIFE?**

It completely changed my way of thinking. My first travels were a bit chaotic and mostly based on improvisation. That pushed me to become resourceful and independent – two assets you need when you are an entrepreneur. Traveling always inspires me. When I am abroad, I think differently. I am more open and relaxed to discovering new ideas.

• **WHAT KIND OF TRAVELER ARE YOU?**

It depends if I travel with family or friends. When I travel with my wife and my three-year old boy, I am looking for comfort and rest. When I escape with friends, I am more adventurous.

THE BEGINNING OF THE LITTLE GUEST HOTELS COLLECTION

When my son Achille was six months old, I took my family on a spontaneous city trip. Confident, I told my wife, “For once, you do not have to worry about anything, I will prepare the suitcases.” When we arrived at our hotel at 1 AM, my young baby was hungry. But when I opened my son’s suitcase to prepare the bottle, I panicked, suddenly realizing that I forgot the bottles at home, which was a two-hour drive from the hotel! When I went to the front desk to get a bottle, I was surprised to find that this five-star hotel did not have one.

In the months that followed, my wife and I struggled to find hotels that met our criteria as young parents, unwilling to compromise between the happiness of our child and our own pleasure. We lost a lot of time on the internet and in travel agencies because there was no platform for scrupulously selected institutions that combined both a real children’s policy and quality services for parents.

I decided to look for these hotels and bring them together under a quality label. And so The Little Guest Hotels Collection (littleguestcollection.com) was born.

An unforgettable trip starts when you turn off your mobile phone and you open yourself to people you meet and places you discover. Enjoy the moment and recognize the chance you have.



• WHAT IS YOUR TYPICAL TRAVEL ITINERARY?

I prefer improvising. I always try to rent a car when I travel, rather than using public transport. When I escape, I love to forget the time and space constraints that are much present in our daily lives.

• WHAT ARE YOUR TRAVEL ESSENTIALS?

My watch, my alliance ring, my earphones, and a lip balm. When I travel alone, it is mainly for business, so I also bring a sharp suit, a white shirt, a knit tie, my laptop, and my smartphone.

When I travel with my family, it is more complicated. My wife loves fashion and she always brings tons of clothes, shoes, and beauty products for her and our son. It is always a big point of discussion between us because she packs the suitcases but I'm the one who carries them.

• DESCRIBE THE PERFECT HOLIDAY FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

Perfect family holidays combine leisure for parents – sports, spa, cultural tours, and fine food – with a real entertainment program for children. And a family trip is one of the best occasions to reconnect with

loved ones. I always find balance between being together and enjoying individual moments. That's the reason we never put our child at the kids-club during all holidays. We love quality moments with him during excursions and meals. My wife and I are sport addicts so we always choose a place that offers sport lessons and is equipped with a gym and a swimming pool.

• WHAT'S ONE LUXURY HOTEL YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ALWAYS GO BACK TO?

Every year we go to the Hôtel Royal (hotel-royal-evian.com) in Evian, France. This five-star kid-friendly hotel located between the Alps and the Lake Geneva is a piece of paradise found in the heart of nature. It offers activities throughout the year, such as skiing and ice skating in the winter and golf and mountain biking in the summer. And it gives the perfect balance between family atmosphere and luxury services. We also have an emotional connection with this hotel, because after my wife gave birth, she and our baby went there to enjoy a Mother-Baby spa cure. The therapists take care of a young mother's well-being and teach her the essential gestures to massage her baby. That was an extraordinary moment for my wife and our child.

• DEFINE THE ULTIMATE LUXURY HOTEL DEDICATED TO FAMILIES.

The perfect luxury hotel dedicated to families is not necessarily ostentatious. It must be considered as a peaceful place where the staff pays attention to every detail, for both parents and children. When you become a parent, you see life with new eyes. Spacious rooms (or even better – connecting rooms) and kids amenities and menus are primary. Above all, the feeling of being safe becomes more important than ever.

• WHY SHOULD FAMILIES CONSIDER FAMILY-FRIENDLY LUXURY HOTELS?

It is the best way to avoid making compromises between the desires of parents and the happiness of children. I am not saying that a child needs to spend holidays in a luxury hotel to be happy. When I was young, I went camping with my parents and I was the happiest boy. But in retrospect, I realized that this type of holiday was not really a vacation for my parents. They prepared the caravan, drove hours by car, went to the supermarket, prepared food, and washed dishes. It was very tiring for them. Now that luxury travel is more accessible, it is time to enjoy it.



• WHICH DESTINATIONS ARE IDEAL FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN?

Every destination in the world is perfect for family travel, as long as your accommodation is equipped to host young children. Cities like Paris and New York are not immediately considered as kid-friendly destinations. But if your hotel offers family-friendly services such as stroller loans, baby equipments, toys and games, and babysitting service, believe me, you will enjoy your stay.

• WHAT'S THE BEST WAY FOR FAMILIES TO HAVE A FUN AND HASSLE-FREE TRIP?

Prepare your family stay. This step takes a lot of time. That's why we created the quality label Little Guest. It facilitates the choice of your family stay, following a user-friendly interface and anticipating all the questions, wants and needs of the parents.

• WHAT'S ONE DESTINATION YOU GO BACK TO AGAIN AND AGAIN?

New York City. This is where I organized a surprise trip to ask my wife for marriage seven years ago, under the starry sky of the Brooklyn Bridge. We discovered the Big Apple a few years back and it was a real love story between this city and us.

Since then, I have returned many times. There's always something new and it has an incredible energy. The same goes for Ibiza, which is why we try to go every year. Not to party in the nightclubs, but to enjoy the beautiful natural UNESCO sites and the wind of lightness inherited from the hippie period.

• WHICH CITY IS MOST MEMORABLE TO YOU?

When I went to Beijing for the first time, I felt like I arrived on another planet. It was strange because even though there were many people in the street, I felt alone since even the taxi drivers do not speak English.

• TELL US ABOUT A TRAVEL EXPERIENCE THAT MAKES YOU LAUGH UNTIL THIS DAY.

To top off my boyhood, my best friends and I rented a van to visit the West Coast of the United States. We finished our trip in Las Vegas where we partied all night long – until we lost one of our friends. We were very worried, but a few hours later, in the early morning, a security guard from the hotel came and brought back our friend, who had drunk too much. Two hours later, we were boarding for a 12-hour flight. With his hangover and our jokes, he had the worst flight of his life. ■



THE 2018 BUCKET LIST

I never plan my travels for the whole year, but rather for the next three months. So in the following months, I will:

Visit Sevilla with a good friend. Go to Algarve in Portugal with my father for a family trip. Spend a few days visiting Italian friends on Lake Como at CastaDiva Resort & Spa (castadivaresort.com), one of our wonderful hotel members.

Then finally, I will spend the holidays with my wife and my boy in Greece, at Ikos Olivia (ikosresorts.com), an amazing resort voted "Best Luxury Family All-In Resort of the World by TripAdvisor." You can also find this hotel on our website.