

# The World is Your Oyster

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Have you ever wanted to take a camel to your next garden party? Or go diving for oysters in Australia? Let a global concierge go to work on your behalf and enjoy life's pearls. Do you get what you want from life? The possibilities are endless. You could have a pair of blue Indian peacocks delivered to your door, or take Deep Flight Aviator Pilot training in the Caribbean. Fancy a break from the heat and hustle of summer? A trip to the North Pole will offer you a refreshing change of scenery. Front row tickets to Live Earth or the next Harry Potter premiere in New York? As Carole King sang, all you have to do is call... The question is who? The answer is a global concierge service. "If you become a member, you are going to have a large team of advisors who are experts in all of the different areas our membership operates in looking after you," says Ben Elliot, Founder of one such service, Quintessentially. This includes travel, events, restaurants, estates, wine, art, shopping, entertainment, health and beauty. "For busy, brilliant, demanding, successful people, that's exactly what they want." I have an assistant, I hear you cry. They might book your flight to Fiji, get you a great rate at a hotel in Tokyo, organize dinner in Dubai and maybe even private access to the Louvre. But does your PA know where has the best wines in Bordeaux, or where to go for a romantic walk in Rome? "Many people have personal assistants, many feel they're included in some places, but you can bet your bottom dollar on a global basis that's not entirely true," emphasizes Elliot, the debonair ex-boyfriend of Jade Jagger. "We offer businessmen, celebrities, musicians, and all the people who live a life in different places their own account manager in any of those places, getting you the best deals, but above all giving you inside information." What is more, while PAs will take time off over Christmas (and so they should!), your global concierge is available all year round. With 24 offices across Europe, the USA, Asia, the Middle East, and South Africa, Quintessentially is a growing concern, launching services such as Quintessentially Reserve, a luxury destination guide, and Quintessentially Qube, its online members' community. In addition, the company regularly throws glamorous parties, like the official after-party for the amfAR gala dinner at the exclusive Eden Roc, Hotel du Cap near Cannes, with a guest list that included Sharon Stone, Harvey Weinstein, Mario Testino, and Robin Williams. ( Wherever you are and whatever you want taken care of, companies like Quintessentially exist to make life easier, richer and fun. Much more fun like the time a member requested a goat dressed as a French maid to be delivered to the south of France. He was planning a stag night in Cannes and wanted the "maid" to be waiting at the airport for the stag party to arrive. "We're only limited by your imagination and our imagination. We'll do anything as long as it's not immoral or illegal," promises Elliot. "The number of millionaires throughout the world grows every year by seven percent. It is unquestionably a growing market," states **Exceptional Means Founder Merle Elias**, who aims to offer VIP treatment to high-net-worth individuals and time-stretched executives. "To me, luxury living means never anything less than the best. We do not search for deals or

bargains," she says. But if you are looking to purchase Apaloosa Horses from Germany or artwork from the Smithsonian, call Elias. Insider knowledge differentiates the good concierge from the exquisite. Consider that you will spend between a quarter and a third of your life in bed: wouldn't you like to know what brand of mattresses you will be lying on, or the type and quality of the linens and pillows you will snuggle up to, next time you are away from home? You may not know which hotels live up to your high expectations, but Global Luxury Living (GLL) members do. GLL's hotel questionnaire was developed by Bob Evans, former President of Paramount Studios, who based the questions on his knowledge of the special needs and requirements of celebrities on location shoots and vacations. Some of GLL's top-rated hotels include Le Mélézin in the French Alps, Le Metropole Palace in Monte Carlo and The Oberoi Rajvilas in Jaipur. Treat yourself to that extra bit of luxury and support a good cause at the same time. GLL, the concierge service for philanthropists, charges \$100,000 per year in the form of a tax-deductible donation to a charity of your choice, approved by GLL. In return, the real-time online service provides access to a comprehensive database of information that includes luxury shopping, hotels, restaurants, villas, yachts and fashion houses worldwide. And if you are too busy to plan your journey, a GLL concierge will sort it all out for you. All? One thing even the best concierge may struggle with is getting hold of a new Ferrari F430 Coupe. The waiting list for the 490 horsepower adrenaline junkie's dream is at least two years. If you feel the cold sweat of withdrawal breaking out on your forehead, maybe it's time you joined Club Sportiva. They have one of the \$240,000 bright red rocket ships. And a rare silver blue Lamborghini Murcielago, and a sapphire blue Aston Martin DB9 Volante with saddle brown leather and mahogany wood interior, to name just three gems from the club's 80-car fleet. Club Sportiva members get the keys to a private multi-million dollar car collection, soon to include a Ferrari 550 Maranello and a Maserati Quattroporte. The club will also deliver a moustache with its Ferrari 308 for all Magnum P.I. fans, or cut cucumber sandwiches in the glove box of its Bentley, if that's what you want. Torbin Fuller, the Club's founder, believes the benefits of his timeshare approach are obvious: "In two simple words, flexibility and variety. If somebody wants to go out and drive an Aston Martin DB9 Volante, they'll typically have to spend \$190,000 or more to buy one. With Club Sportiva, once you've become a member, you simply call up and reserve the car for next weekend." Take your special someone on a romantic getaway in a red Ferrari F355 Spider with tan leather the week afterwards. Then carve the twisty mountain roads of San Francisco Bay with a sunshine yellow Lamborghini Gallardo three weeks later. "It's an all-wheel drive with a V10 engine," raves Fuller. "That will get your adrenaline pumping." The club is focused on like-minded people. Every member, amongst them legendary racer Mario Andretti, NFL Hall of Famer Dave Casper and Apollo 12 astronaut Dick Gordon, has an interest in cars. "It's the cars that get people to join, but once they are in the club they have fun when they take the time out to join us for dinner, an evening of fine art, a cigar night, or poker night. The road rallies are probably the most popular," reckons Fuller. Such rallies might take you for a tasting to D.R. Stevens' and on along scenic mountain roads

to Caymus Winery, both high-end wines owned by Club Sportiva members. From there on to dinner at Carneros Inn in Nappa and along the Pacific coast to Marin Headlands to watch the sunset – all in your favorite vehicle. What more do you want from a fine summer Sunday? The industry is burgeoning. Two more car share companies, the Classic Car Club and Van Horssen Group, opened in late 2005, along with different smaller clubs all offering the pleasures and thrills of driving a classic or exotic sports car without the complications of ownership. All you need do is pick the right one for you. The same is true for your global concierge service. Let them find the oysters, open them, and serve you the treasures. And if you feel like it, ask for the salty and savory Speciales de Normandie, or the softer and smoother Breton – because you can.

**SIDEBAR**  
Why I Joined Jennifer Trahan joined Club Sportiva because of a growing “personal enthusiasm” for cars. “Club Sportiva seemed like a great way to build my knowledge and experience with cars, meet great people with the same interests and generally have a great time.” “I have driven the Lotus Elise and the 69 Jag E-type, so far – unique cars that I would not have driven otherwise. “My personal car is a Mercedes C32 AMG but I have aspirations to own a classic or two somewhere in the future. My dream is a 1950s Porsche 356. “There is nothing chauvinistic about the club at all. There are a lot of women out there that appreciate the beauty and craftsmanship of cars. And if someone isn’t very confident in their technical abilities to drive a high performance car, the club starts every member with a one-on-one driving instruction lesson, which is fantastic.”