

## sponsor spotlight

By Cara Lane

# meet Caitlin & Darren HUMPHREYS

YOUR TRAVEL  
SOMMELIER  
TO THE WORLD



Meet Caitlin & Darren. Photo taken by Rosemary Tufankjan

When Darren Humphreys left the world of finance after 20 years to establish the ultimate travel concierge service in 2011, he had already cultivated a profound knowledge of the far-flung corners of the globe, and of the finer things in life. The decision for him was clear cut:

“I had always coveted the idea of having this very unique travel business that would showcase destinations the way I had experienced them.”

Discerning clients across the country look to Travel Sommelier as their trusted intermediary when seeking extraordinary travel. As experts in food and wine, Darren and his wife, Caitlin, take your itinerary further, while their love of world culture invites guests deeper into their destinations.

“We give you world-class, immersive experiences that will truly rock your world,” said Darren.

Having grown up in South Africa, the company initially revolved around Safari, but Darren soon discovered that these adventures into the wild only filled a portion of a guest’s usually lengthier itinerary, and realized the opportunity to offer more elaborate plans. Beyond the typically ordinary offerings outside a Safari, Darren developed a niche based on a little-known fact about his native country—that South Africa’s wine tourism lure is one of the strongest in the world.

“Darren has a distinct palette and deep wine knowledge,” offers Caitlin, “so much that he was invited as a taster for the opening of an expensive bottle bought at auction to verify its authenticity.”

Travel Sommelier invited travelers on forays into gastronomy and wine which often included accommodations on working wineries or in the surrounding villages. Darren and Caitlin agree that the moniker immediately resonated with the customer base, while



The team behind Travel Sommelier’s luxury vacations. Photo taken by Rosemary Tufankjan

their exquisitely tailored trips gained them a following of clientele who sought Travel Sommelier’s expertise in other corners of the world:

“Customers would relay to us how they loved the way we had thought about their trip; They’d say, ‘We loved the creativity, the design, and the fact that we were enveloped in the platform...Where else can we go? We want you to take care of all our travel.’”

Darren had already started the business when he was introduced to Caitlin, then a lawyer, shortly after she had embarked on a group trip to the Berkshires. While acquainting herself with her fellow hikers, she shared her love of travel—ironically she had recently returned from South Africa—with a couple who knew Darren. Their matchmakers invited them on a blind date to their home in Connecticut and remain as dear friends and some of Travel Sommelier’s best clients. The well-traveled couple married five years ago, joined forces in the business, and returned to Caitlin’s native Duxbury. At that point, though Africa was in their hearts, they decided to listen to the market pull. Pivoting a few years ago, they began to offer a smattering of trips to Latin America, Europe, New Zealand, and the Galapagos Islands before branching out into Southeast Asia. They’d eventually curate trips nearly everywhere else, based on limitless requests from returning clients.



Exploring Croatia



They prefer to meet clients in person to find out “what makes them tick,” according to Darren, as Caitlin explains how they had just flown south to familiarize themselves with a new client over dinner. That extra effort is commonplace: whether planning for a group of women, a multigenerational family, or a couple, they adhere strictly to a “listen twice, talk once ratio” while developing their relationships with clients. The results are beautifully balanced itineraries which consider the needs and tastes of the individuals traveling. From dietary restrictions to room orientation preferences, their research is deeply detailed and personal.

“We’re experts in determining what a variety of guests enjoy, from outdoor excursions to trips centered around art, music, or gastronomy,” said Darren, “and at a pace which is pleasurable.”

Both well-traveled, the couple has vetted every accommodation and location before adding it to their portfolio. With discriminating guests who expect distinctive, thoughtful, and higher-end trips, they always have an eye for value.

“When I started traveling, I didn’t have two pennies to rub together,” explains Darren. He built his early foundation backpacking around the world before taking a job as a deckhand on a cargo ship. He kept his motorcycle ready to disembark wherever and whenever he’d earned just enough, exploring ports on his own and meeting people along the way. “I’d work a bit, then travel.”

Once in finance, a healthier paycheck mushroomed Darren’s travel in terms of luxury experiences. He added a handful of destinations every year, eventually making his way around the world. That holistic approach to travel offers clients tangible, first-hand knowledge of their destinations, providing an implicit trust the couple agrees is sacrosanct when negotiating travel arrangements with



Three-year-old Charlie already picked out his car in England!



The Humphrey Family. Photo taken by Lindsay Murphy



a third party. Travel Sommelier promises a good measure of hand-holding that begins from their first conversation with a client to their debriefings once a traveler returns and a tight relationship forms with a team allocated to every departure. Comprised of a salesperson, a journey destination specialist who handles all the nuts of bolts, and a sweeper who handles flights, insurances, various documentation, medical advice, and other administrative details, “there’s a wide bandwidth of care.”

As illustrious as their taste in travel may be, the couple appreciates time at home and the simple joys that come from life on the South Shore. Caitlin favors clamming in the shallows, while Darren and their boys, three-year-old Charlie and one-year-old Soren, enjoy swimming as much as possible. Living seaside in Duxbury, time on the water comes easily - the beach awaits just at the end of their quiet street and the family just bought their own boat, too. Entertaining friends “maybe too much!” over wine dinners is a treasured pastime while visits with Caitlin’s mother Catherine Bush, who still lives in Winslow’s View as one of the first residents of Pinehills, round out their routine.

The Humphreys have adopted a thoughtful and charitable approach to life, as well. They are contributors to South Shore Hospital and Darren sits on the Board of the South Shore Conservatory, but their focus remains on preserving the far reaches of the world for future generations. Reinvesting in Africa, Darren says, “is non-negotiable.” Travel Sommelier gives to both Rhino Conservation Botswana, and Upright Africa, organizations that are dedicated to wildlife conservation, precious land preservation, and their related communities. Without them, the wide world won’t be worth seeing. They immediately introduced their own children to travel and believe it’s the biggest gift they can give—Charlie thoroughly enjoyed his first jaunt to London and the English countryside recently, proving he has the travel bug, too.

With Travel Sommelier’s white-glove service offering personally tailored trips, Caitlin reminds us of the power a well-curated journey with friends or loved ones can have on relationships - and on one’s outlook: “Don’t underestimate the bonding element of travel. You may truly reconnect. Even more, it may open your eyes and completely refresh your perspective.”

**To learn more about Darren and Caitlin’s luxury travel concierge services, visit [travelsommelier.com](http://travelsommelier.com) and begin building your dream trip. Contact Travel Sommelier at (781) 934-6752 or via email: [info@travelsommelier.com](mailto:info@travelsommelier.com).**