

World Alliance

Anetta Nowosielska | Photo: Nick Garcia | September 25, 2014

When it comes to bespoke, life-affirming travel experiences, Gilles Dandrieux is the adventure connoisseur to call on.



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Hemisphere Destinations CEO Gilles Dandrieux specializes in self-discovery travel experiences from North America to Patagonia.

For Gilles Dandrieux, journeys are best told in pictures. “I remember taking a client to a big rock in the middle of nowhere, somewhere in Peru at sunset,” recalls the CEO of [Hemisphere Destinations](#), an agency with a singular focus on ultimate travel experiences. “He wasn’t too thrilled at first, but I assured him that once the sun began to set in the very spot we were standing, he’d better be ready with his camera. Then it happened, and the look of utter amazement on his face is one I still remember.”

These kinds of bespoke sojourns (which can cost as high as into the six figures) have been keeping Dandrieux—a Miami-based, African-born, Franco-Italian—busy with a steady slew of posh clients (among them folks from LVMH and an enviable group of high-net-worth thrill-seekers too exclusive to mention) looking for that something extraordinary. “When we travel well, we connect with the environment, and, in essence, we reconnect with ourselves,” adds Dandrieux, who, not surprisingly considering his proclivity for picture-perfect moments, started out as a documentary producer.

What Dandrieux calls his “self-discovery- through-travel-bit” approach has been integral to his company’s success. Whether he’s orchestrating a perfume launch

on the salt flats of Chile or a romantic getaway for two on a luxury cruise down the Amazon River, soul-searching is subliminally built into the itineraries he creates. With a little psychology, lots of creative intuition and impeccable timing, Dandrieux's meticulously curated treks have life-transforming qualities. "I create a story, a scenario, where the clients become actors moving in an environment," he adds, revealing the love for film that's still in him. "I even select the music they will hear and offer them quartz stones for energy."

With a geographic playground that reaches the top of North America all the way to Patagonia, Dandrieux commits three months of the year to explore roads less traveled as he scouts new destinations to offer his well-heeled customer base. This fall he's in full planning mode through Mexico for the brand executives attending the first SIAR (a luxury watch show) in Mexico City as well as catering to the mallet set headed to the World Polo Championship in Argentina. In between, he'll be checking out Bolivia, which he believes is poised to become the jet set's next hot destination. When exploring, Dandrieux doesn't rely on GPS apps or guides of any sort. He simply lets intuition lead the way. "I grew up like a gypsy and that has taught me to be comfortable in any environment or culture," he adds. "Sometimes I arrive at that point where the road forks and I just take the path that feels right. I've never been disappointed by what I've found at the end."

Dandrieux's Hots

Driving toward the sunset in the Salar de Uyuni, being greeted by children of the Embera tribes of Panama, a hot shower after a five-day trek through the Amazon

Dandrieux's Nots

Losing my passport, all-night readers on trans-Atlantic flights, being stranded at the airport