

∴ INTERVIEW

The Virtuoso Traveler

Kay and Paul Latta's travel advisors open doors around the world. [INTERVIEWED BY DAVID HOCHMAN](#)



Venice from the Hotel Cipriani, and with the Lattas by canal.

KAY AND PAUL LATTA DIDN'T ALWAYS TRAVEL AS WELL as they do now. Long before she became a successful CPA and he a dentist, the couple from Tyler, Texas, saw the world like many Texans do: Kay from the back of her parents' pickup and Paul on family car trips as far as Galveston. Today, travel is priority one for the early-50s couple and their two sons, Andrew, 12, and Matthew, 17. "We always want to go places, and we love the anticipation of the trip as much as being there," Paul says. To help them plan, they rely on Tyler-based Virtuoso travel advisors Sharon Howell and Tammy Jones.

Q You recently returned from the Mediterranean. What was that like?

Kay: "We took a 12-day cruise on Regent's *Seven Seas Mariner* for our 25th anniversary and then went on to several days in Italy, where we stayed at some incredible hotels: the

Hotel Cipriani overlooking Saint Mark's in Venice and the Hassler Roma's Villa Medici Suite in Rome overlooking the Spanish Steps. When you see postcards of the Spanish Steps, you actually see our seventh-floor suite and deck chairs in the background. The wow factor was *beyond!*"

What word best describes the type of travelers you are?

Paul: "Detailed! In Italy, for instance, we wanted to see Pompeii and the island of Capri but only had a day. Our sage guide from Pallenberg Bros. Travel Service was stealthy and organized down to the minute. He picked us up early from our Sorrento tender, drove us to Pompeii, and took us literally behind the ropes on a private tour before the tourist hordes came. Then it was a hydrofoil to Capri, private cars up and down the coast, and we got it all done in a day."

Do you ever relax?

Kay: "Why would we? There's too much to see! I'm always flipping through *1,000 Places to See Before You Die* and *Virtuoso's Best of the Best* hotel directory saying, 'Gotta go here, gotta go there.'"

Paul: "As Leonardo da Vinci once said, 'Life well spent is long.'"

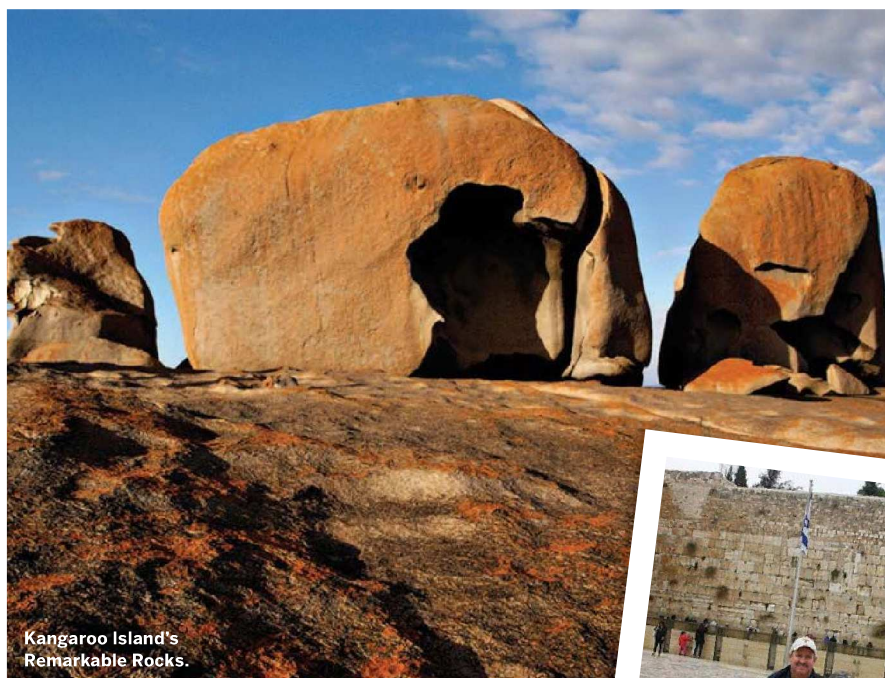
Never travel without:

Kay: "Ziplocs and garbage bags. We love to follow the Texas Longhorns. We were at a pregame picnic before the Rose Bowl a few years ago. It had rained the day before, and the ground was really wet. We used garbage bags to keep the ground dry. Ever since, we stash them in our luggage."

Paul: "A luggage scale. We keep one at home so we can pack our bags to 49.75 pounds."

What can travel advisors like Sharon and Tammy do that the Internet can't?

Kay: "So many things. They can connect you with the right people, that's for sure. I like to do research and made the mistake of trying to book a limo company to get us from the airport to New York City. I spent



Kangaroo Island's Remarkable Rocks.

The Lattas in Jerusalem.

What's the next "gotta go there" vacation?

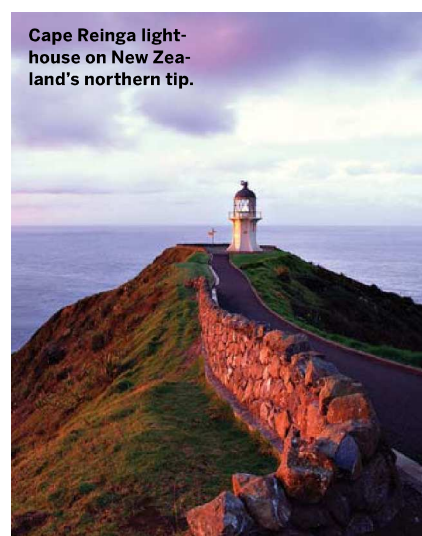
Kay: "New Zealand and Australia over Thanksgiving. Pre-cruise, we plan to see some of the Great Barrier Reef and may also visit Kangaroo Island. We use our cruise trips to see where we'd like to visit on a second trip to the area. I don't think we'll ever lose the travel bug."

hours online for a family trip with grandmothers involved. Ooowee! The company I chose was terrible! That will teach me to book something myself. Virtuoso opens doors to amenities and benefits you cannot provide yourself."

Name a hotel perk worth splurging on.

Paul: "Club-level privileges. I like to pay a good price for a room and have most things included, so I like the club lounge. You can have a drink at the end of the day and a snack or meal. Just a little extra comfort on the road." VI

Love your travel advisor? Tell us about your favorite trips and experiences (vleditors@virtuoso.com), and you could be featured in a future issue.



Cape Reinga lighthouse on New Zealand's northern tip.

(KANGAROO ISLAND) JAIN MAJESTERON/ALAMY, (NEW ZEALAND) SIMONE/ISTOCK PHOTO