

REBECCA RECOMMENDS

Inspirational destinations & properties of excellence

Celebrating Inspirational Women in Travel



Meet a Number of Women We Work with Every Day Who are Changing the Way We View the World Through Travel

Dear Friends,

At Rebecca Recommends, we are fortunate to work with an amazing team of women - [read about these talented ladies](#) here. Beyond our small group, we also have the opportunity to collaborate and learn from female visionaries at our partners worldwide, from The Torridon's co-owner and superb room designer to a master gardener at Babylonstoren. The introductions and stories below offer insight into how women are changing the face of travel.

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What's more, the properties and destinations showcased here offer special settings in which women traveling together can connect, from quiet moments sipping refreshing cocktails under century-old trees at Castello del Sole in Ascona, Switzerland, to having life-changing adventures in Sri Lanka, or shopping and dining their way through New York City on an exclusive trip where all doors have been opened by Beyond Times Square.

Whether you're planning travel for multiple generations of family led by a strong matriarch, a group of female friends finally getting away for that long-dreamt-of vacation together, or a mom-and-daughter weekend, read on for inspiration. The women you will meet here, and the incredible ways they're personalizing experiences for the world's most savvy travelers, will have you dreaming of your own girls getaway.

Should you have any questions about any of these experiences, or would like to know more about the women at the forefront of travel, please reach out and we can put you in touch.

Fondly,

Rebecca

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Rebecca's mother and Nanna who continue to inspire her daily.

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Michelle Devlin, General Manager

[Red Carnation Hotels](#) - Setting Sustainability Standards Across the Collection

Meet the woman driving sustainability from the heart of Red Carnation Hotels. Since joining the Red Carnation Hotel Collection in 2005 and progressing to General Manager at The Egerton House Hotel in 2012, Michelle Devlin's dedication to sustainability has inspired tangible change across the collection. Michelle has launched global Green Teams in each property, identifying and removing single-use plastics and advocating for more plant-based alternatives on menus. At her own hotel, she has created a highly successful and in-demand Vegan Afternoon Tea. Wherever sustainability is practiced and celebrated throughout the Red Carnation collection, Michelle has had direct involvement.

Turning words into action, Michelle has helped lead the Red Carnation sustainability committee in their implementation of green-conscious goals. Red Carnation has committed to a five-year 'How We TreadRight' strategy that is in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. As well as regular committee meetings, Michelle also meets the committee on an individual basis, monitoring development towards each goal and supporting each ambassador in their endeavors.

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It is near impossible to appropriately sum up Michelle's impact on the sustainability culture across the collection; the best way to experience it is to live it oneself, whether you or your discerning clients. You'll soon see how this family-owned and run business genuinely cares for its people and the local communities in which they operate.

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Gundula Deutschländer, Master Gardener

[Babylonstoren](#) - Meet the Guardian of the Healing Garden (and Get Recipes Too!)

Green-thumbed Babylonstoren guests can meet Master Gardener Gundula Deutschländer, the true gem of the property's gardening team. Gundula has been with Babylonstoren since day one and has long captivated visitors with her engaging storytelling, gentle demeanor and wealth of horticultural knowledge. She sparks an interest in and curiosity for gardening in all guests with whom she crosses paths as she shares her excitement about plants, especially the herbs and flowers of the Healing Garden. Besides wowing crowds with her vast knowledge of healing plants and working her magic in the garden, she brews a mean herbal tea! Tip: Be sure to ask her for interesting recipes from the garden.

Visitors are encouraged to take a tour or one of the regular workshops Gundula hosts on the practical means of using herbs for their benefit. She sees these moments as opportunities to share what the gardening team has learned and also to learn from others - not only about the Babylonstoren garden, but about gardening in general.

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Kelli White, Director of Education

[Meadowood Napa Valley](#) - Women Who Wow Us in the Wine World

Raise a glass with, and to, your favorite women at the Wine Center at Meadowood, one of the most cherished experiential offerings on the estate. Led by two of the most highly respected experts in wine education (who happen to be women), guests enjoy fine wine, discover the nuances of Napa's terroir, and learn about all aspects of wine appreciation. Discover the world's various regions of production, and the technical, aesthetic, and social underpinnings of fine wine through exclusive, curated tasting experiences.

The wonderful wine women in charge:

Kelli A. White, Director of Education

Kelli worked as a sommelier for nearly a decade between New York City and Napa Valley. In 2013, *Food & Wine* magazine named her one of the top sommeliers in the country. She is also a celebrated wine writer, having earned numerous awards for pieces commissioned by a range of publications. In 2015, she published her first book, the acclaimed *Napa Valley, Then & Now*, and recently contributed to the latest edition of Jancis Robinson and Hugh Johnson's *World Atlas of Wine*. She is also a coveted speaker, having lectured on wine all over the world, including at

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Fortune Magazine's Most Powerful Women's Summit, and has also made select television and film appearances.

Sarah Bray, Associate Director, Wine Education

Sarah is a wine writer and educator who spent over a decade in New York, first in publishing at *Condé Nast* and *SAVEUR* magazines, and then later at *Sotheby's*. Subsequently, she worked internationally as the European Director of VinConnect, working with such top estates as Champagne Philipponnat, Borgogno, and Chateau Leoville Poyferre. She has been a contributor to *Food & Wine*, *Departures*, *SAVEUR* and other publications. She holds the highest-level recognition from the internationally renowned Wines & Spirits Education Trust, Level 4 Diploma in Wine and Spirits.

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Rohaise Rose Bristow, co-owner of The Torridon

[The Torridon](#) - Meet the Woman Behind the Curtains

Co-owner Rohaise Rose Bristow is the genius behind the unique design of every room at The Torridon. Originally built as a shooting lodge in 1887, the hotel maintains many of its original features, lovingly preserved alongside contemporary furnishings that create a warm, welcoming feel. Rohaise has a keen eye for design and creates each room's design to highlight its distinctive architecture, while making reference to the storied 135-year history of the house. She says, "I love creating something special that is different that you wouldn't have in your own home, but feels so comfortable that it could be in your own room. I like to think of each room as a piece of art, creating conversation and exceeding expectations. I want guests to feel inspired by my design so they may look to reuse ideas." Rohaise draws inspiration from the local landscape and incorporates pieces from local suppliers to ensure that not only do the rooms look stunning, but they are as sustainable as possible.

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Rosie Peattie and Sally Strange, Client Relationship Managers and Blue Badge Guides

[Dream Escape](#) - Meet the “Mary Poppins” Trip Guiding, and Her Expert Team

At the heart of Dream Escape is an extraordinary in-house guiding department run by the incredible, award-winning Client Relationship Managers and Blue Badge Guides, Rosie Peattie and Sally Strange. Rosie and Sally ensure that the Dream Escape reputation is upheld, known as the best in the industry with extensive and invaluable on-the-ground knowledge and contacts. They ensure the whole team is always up to date with new experiences, updates and goings-on. Rosie and Sally vet all Dream Escape guides, and handpick them according to the requirements and interests of each individual client or group. Whether for an active family or special interest group, they review all guides to ensure that your clients are matched with the best fit guide and therefore have the most rewarding possible experience. Find out what Rosie and Sally have been up to the “Rosemary and Sage” column in [Dream Escape Magazine](#).

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Madeleine Löhner, Managing Director Operations

[The Living Circle](#), [Alex Lake Zürich](#) - Meet Madeleine, Inspiring a Taste for Travel in Zürich

For guests of discerning tastes, whether at table or in their hotel space, The Alex Lake Zürich's privileged lakeside location is perfection. The hotel has blossomed under the leadership of Madeleine Löhner, who took the reins of the five-star property at the beginning of 2023. As an experienced host with extensive restaurant experience, Madeleine is the perfect match for the hotel's refined culinary offerings, including the Michelin-starred Restaurant AQUA. Drawing on her love of all things culinary, Madeleine has planned an exclusive Saturday brunch offer, which will premier this spring. As a certified sommelier, she is also able to introduce guests to the complementary Swiss wines to accompany the brunch. Reserve a table now for your clients staying at Alex Lake Zürich or at other Living Circle properties within Zürich.

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Daphne Burt



Julie Johns



Barbara Schmid



Liz Kingdon

[The Nare](#) - The Right-Hand Team of Women Who Make A Cornwall Stay So Exceptional

The Nare's long-term staff are one of the key ingredients to making guests stays so comfortable. Many of these are exceptionally talented women. Let's meet them!

With 40 years of dedicated service: Julie Johns

Julie is one of The Nare's longest-standing team members. She has a wealth of experience on everything about the hotel and knows countless guests who have been coming for decades. Julie

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has now stepped back from her role as deputy to the General Manager, Matthew Voyle, and now very ably assists and implements country-house interior designs and schemes around the hotel.

A welcome sight, again and again: Barbara Schmid

Barbara is celebrating her 25th year at The Nare. She was the former Restaurant Manageress for many years before stepping back and becoming the hotel's popular maître d'. Since 1998, she has remained fiercely loyal to The Nare and today remains a welcoming sight to returning guests. She is considered one of The Nare's "national treasures."

Five-star housekeeping: Liz Kingdon

Liz first started at The Nare in the early '90s and has built a great team. She is driven by detail, ensuring every room is as perfect as the next, not only for when guests arrive but throughout their stay. Read [Liz's memoirs - 20 years at The Nare \(narehotel.co.uk\)](#).

A lifelong confidant: Daphne Burt

Mrs. Burt is still involved in the business after many, many years. In fact, she came to the hotel when Bettye Gray (the current proprietor's grandmother) purchased The Nare back in 1989. Today Mrs. Burt remains a close confidant to Toby Ashworth. Read [an interview with Mrs. Burt - looking back on 60 years in Cornish hotels \(narehotel.co.uk\)](#).

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*Norma Holder
Financial Controller*



*Brenda Abbott
Executive Housekeeper*



*Maurine Bowers
Executive Chef*



*Toya Turner
Reservations & Revenue*



*Wendy Eardley
Resident Manager*



*Bara'a Yousef
Spa Manager*



*Anique Goodman
Human Resources Manager*

Curtain Bluff - Meet the Women at the Helm of Antigua's Finest Resort

The idyllic haven of the boutique-style, family-owned Curtain Bluff is nestled among the palm trees on a rocky outcrop between two secluded coves. All 72 rooms boast oceanfront views, and all guests have access to watersports, pro tennis courts and two spectacular private beaches.

A female-led owner and management team sits at the helm of the beloved resort. This group of dynamic women leads the charge in various segments of the resort's operation, from revenue to housekeeping to guest relations, some for as long as 20 years. They are integral in defining what makes this award-winning Caribbean resort still so special today, more than 60 years after opening.

A respected matriarch, owner Chelle Hulford, wife of the now deceased Howard Hulford, still lives on the resort in the Bluff House, where she hosts the resort's weekly cocktail party (a real fan

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favorite!). Chelle's female-led management team also just happens to be comprised of all local Antiguan.

Being owned and operated by the Hulford family for the last 60 years has meant that Curtain Bluff has truly become a part of the island. Its 200+ employees are family, many having worked at the property for more than a decade, creating lasting relationships with the resort's exceptionally high number of repeat guests.

Curtain Bluff celebrates its local Antiguan and all-female management team:

- Norma Holder, Financial Controller
- Brenda Abbott, Executive Housekeeper
- Maurine Bowers, Executive Chef
- Toya Turner, Reservations & Revenue Manager
- Wendy Eardley, Resident Manager
- Bara'a Yousef, Spa Manager
- Anique Goodman, Human Resources Manager

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Sherani Ruberu, AVP of Sustainability



Natasha Arumugam, Operations Manager

[Resplendent Ceylon](#) - Celebrating Sri Lanka, and the Women Who Know It and Love It Most

Whereas Resplendent Ceylon as a whole embodies the essence of Sri Lanka, the women at the heart of this hospitality company embody the dedication and stellar example necessary to showcase this magical, teardrop-shaped isle for all guests.

Two women, in particular, help everything run smoothly for Resplendent Ceylon, which includes Ceylon Tea Trails, Cape Weligama and Wild Coast Tented Lodge. Recently promoted to Operations Support Manager, Natasha Arumugam has worked on site at Ceylon Tea Trails and Cape Weligama, as well as in Colombo at the Resplendent Ceylon head office as part of the Reservations and Sales and Marketing teams. She currently undertakes experience curation, helping reveal the best of Sri Lanka for guests, as well as events management and operational support at the resorts. Sociable, hardworking and compassionate, she is always armed with a positive attitude and loves always being on the moves. It is in Natasha's nature to lend a helping hand and support her fellow teammates when the need arises.

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Growing up in the beautiful tropical island of Sri Lanka, diving in its seas and exploring its jungles, Sherani Ruberu, AVP of Sustainability at Resplendent Ceylon, always knew her calling was environmental conservation. She specializes in biodiversity conservation with a focus on private sector and community engagement, which has culminated with her heading sustainability for Resplendent Ceylon. Consequently, she continues to push for sustainable business practices in Sri Lanka's tourism sector. Sherani is driven by the urgency for sustainable development and believes in establishing collaborative and effective partnerships to find innovative, practical solutions to the world's most pressing environmental and social sustainability issues.

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Karen Fedorko Sefer, Founder

[Sea Song](#) - A Note from Founder/CEO Karen Fedorko Sefer

Sea Song Founder/CEO Karen Fedorko Sefer reflects on the company's mission: "After a 23-year journey developing the Sea Song tours brand in Turkey, I can look back on the determination to make this luxury brand succeed in a world of mass tourism. Starting from nothing and convincing suppliers and people alike to follow me on this journey so we can make a difference was a definite challenge. We worked diligently with locals to convince them of the value of showcasing their culture and cuisine, and developing experiences that are authentic and that they can also make into businesses. We moved forward and the team was amazed to see that the reaction to luxury was a huge success, and we were able to bring higher-quality travelers to Turkey. We were also able to upgrade the shore offerings of nine cruise lines in Turkey.

As we continue to grow and build our brand and Turkey gains more infrastructure, the success continues!"

Reach out if you'd like to be connected with Karen and her strong team at Sea Song.

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Kerstin Remy



Stephanie Day



Angela Montebello



Francesca Shukla

[The Hari](#) - Wise Women Leading the Way

The Hari's service-driven team embeds well-being and empowerment in every aspect of their hotel management - they are thrilled to highlight of the fantastic achievements attained by some of their very own.

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Sustainability Executive Angela Montebello proudly assisted The Hari in being awarded Bronze accreditation by Earth Check UK, the world's leading certification for sustainable destinations and tourism organizations.

Assistant Housekeeping Manager Raluca Tudorascu was presented with The Hari's "Lead the Way - Manager of The Year" award, which recognizes her outstanding leadership skills and dedication to the hotel.

Commercial Director - Sales & Marketing Kerstin Remy was recently named in the 2023 Walpole Power List, which highlights the biggest names and the brightest minds who are setting the course of the British luxury industry for the coming year.

The Hari team would also like to celebrate three special new additions to the hotel family! Sales Director Stephanie Day delivered twins Maisie and Harrison, and Communications Manager Francesca Shukla gave birth to baby Louis in January 2023.

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Sangita Shrestha Einhaus and Ambica Shrestha, Owner Managers

[Dwarika's Hotel](#) and [Resort](#) - Generations of Female Excellence Leading the Way in the Nepalese Hospitality Industry

Dwarika's is a sanctuary for cultural and natural heritage envisioned by Dwarika Das Shrestha. It was through Ambica Shrestha's strong determination, however, that Dwarika's Group has withstood the test of time and become known for its exquisite experience. She continued to work on their dream project even after her husband's passing in 1991, taking command of the growing business, even in times when gender inequality was evident and the Nepali conservative society discouraged women entrepreneurship. Breaking all the barriers with her strong will, Ambica Shrestha has become one of the most influential pioneers in women entrepreneurship and the Nepalese hotel industry.

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Ambica's legacy has been passed down to her daughter, Sangita Shrestha Einhaus, another visionary and courageous woman of the family. She expanded the Dwarika's with the creation of the group's second property, the Dwarika's Resort, a truly unique place to relax and reconnect. At present, the business is run by the third generation of the Shrestha family and the progressive ideology has held strong. Both the hotel and resort boast passionate teams inclusive of all genders and ages, acknowledging the importance of equity based on the knowledge and skills one possesses rather than how one identifies.

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Amanda Dougans, Reservations; Sales & Marketing Development Manager

[Great Fosters](#) - Celebrating a Leading Lady Who Makes Every Stay Spectacular

When your clients stay at Great Fosters - convenient to Heathrow and close to Windsor and Hampton Court - they're not only enjoying a serene estate holiday but are privy to the expertise of one of Great Fosters finest employees. Amanda Dougans has worked at the hotel since 1999, originally heading up the Events office, and today serving as your main point of contact for experiences and itineraries at and around this historic property.

Amanda has held various roles over the years and relished the challenges that have come with the changes and improvements that have taken place on the estate during the last 23 years. In fact, Amanda has worked at Great Fosters for so long that she's almost considered part of the furniture!

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Amanda and her husband have lived 20 minutes from Great Fosters for the same length of time, raising their two girls who are now 21 and 18 years old. There isn't much that she doesn't know about the estate, and she is a wealth of knowledge on what to see and experience in the area. Amanda serves as a wonderful ambassador for Great Fosters and her love and enthusiasm for the property shines through.

In Amanda's words, "Great Fosters has been and continues to be such a large part of my life and I am truly thankful for all the fabulous people (both colleagues and guests) that I have met and the wonderful opportunities that working here has given me."

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The wonderful women in leadership at Hartwell House & Spa

[Hartwell House & Spa](#) - Where A Warm Welcome Awaits in the English Countryside

Hartwell House is proud to shine a light on their amazing women, who play an integral part in the property's leadership team, ensuring that service excellence and guest satisfaction are at the heart of what they do every day.

Sue Winchcombe heads Hartwell House & Spa's Human Resources department; Hartwell Spa is led by Rebecca Cade with the assistance of Alice Waite; Mirella Di Bratto meticulously plans the conferences, events and weddings; while Georgia Godfrey and Heather Batty handle all the guest reservations. The award-winning dining room, The Soane, is managed by Samantha Howells and the Head Housekeeper, Nicola Burton, with assistance from Gemma Sear and her team, ensures the hotel's bedrooms are spotlessly clean and ready to welcome valued guests. If your clients would like to visit this countryside gem and the wonderful women who help it all run so seamlessly, please be in touch.

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Lady Mary Wortley Montagu

[Middlethorpe Hall & Spa](#) - An Ode to the Remarkable Women Who Loved Middlethorpe

Join Middlethorpe Hall and Spa in celebrating Lady Mary Wortley Montagu (1689-1762), eminent diarist, writer and poet, who lived at Middlethorpe Hall and whose portrait hangs in the staircase. She was one of the most remarkable women of the 18th century, not least due to her campaigning for the introduction of smallpox inoculation to England after returning from living in Turkey, where her husband was Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Her life reflected the privileges and pitfalls of being a fiercely intelligent, creative and ambitious aristocratic woman in England during the early 18th century.

Middlethorpe also commemorates Fanny Rollo Wilkinson (1855-1951), the first woman Professional Landscape Gardener in England who paved the way for women to enter the profession. She lived at Middlethorpe Hall as a child, and was inspired by the gardens there, which led her to apply to the Crystal Palace School of Landscape Gardening. She spent several months in America in 1901, where she met with Olmstead and other leading garden designers. Back in England, in 1902 she was a founder member of the Women's Agricultural and Horticultural International Union, through which women were recruited to sustain agriculture and food production during the First World War. She went on to create more than 75 public gardens throughout London, from large parks to small churchyards. Look for the Blue Plaque commemorating "Fanny" in the gardens at Middlethorpe.

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Commemorating Esmé Kirby, protector of Snowdonia

[Bodysgallen Hall & Spa](#) - Celebrating Women in Wales

Bodysgallen Hall celebrates Esmé Kirby (1910-1999), a fierce conservationist and the woman who set up a society to protect Snowdonia. This world-renowned place of natural beauty draws nature-loving travelers who return to their homes around the world talking about Wales and what it has to offer. Looking out from the Snowdonia View bedrooms, the Snowdonia Mountain range can be seen across Bodysgallen's gardens, a magnificent backdrop through all the seasons. A sheep farmer, Esmé Kirby, and her husband, Peter, co-founded the Snowdonia National Park Society in 1967 to ensure the protection of the mountains. Their hill farm home, Dyffryn Mymbyr, was left by Esmé to the National Trust for the nation to enjoy. In 1997, Esmé initiated the eradication of grey squirrels from the island of Anglesey and today, the grey squirrel remains absent while containing the largest red squirrel population in Wales.

Katherine Jenkins, internationally renowned mezzo-soprano, is also celebrated as the most popular classical-crossover artist of all time. Married to American painter Andrew Levitas, Katherine chooses to stay at Bodysgallen Hall when performing at the Venue Cymru in Llandudno, where she knows she will have a warm welcome and the discretion that her celebrity years for.

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[The Living Circle](#), [Castello del Sole, Ascona](#) - A Natural Hideaway Like No Other

Moments between women create unforgettable memories, whether that's mother and daughter, sisters, or best friends. A vacation at the Castello del Sole in Ascona, Switzerland, offers many opportunities to carve out exclusively feminine spaces. Stand-up paddle on Lake Maggiore directly from the hotel's private beach, shop in the historic center of beautiful Ascona, or chat in the shade of the century-old trees in the large park while sipping a refreshing drink prepared with herbs from the garden. Philine Brunner's stable also offers a chance to disconnect for a few hours - It's *Little Women*, all grown up.

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The wonderful women at Beyond Times Square

[Beyond Times Square](#) - A Worldwide Team of Women Bringing New York City (and more!) to Life for Luxury Travelers

Perhaps a little-known fact about New York City-based luxury DMC Beyond Times Square is that behind General Manager Joel Cohen is a team made up entirely of women - and outstanding women at that!

Who are these women that give 100% plus each and every day to assist in BTSQ's mission to create extraordinary experiences and sensational life-long memories for your luxury travel clients? They are seasoned travel industry vets who come from all parts of the globe, yet have come together and share a common goal - to serve sophisticated individual and group travelers by delivering tailor-made, upscale travel programs brimming with authentic local experiences.

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Here's a glimpse at the women behind the scenes and where they hail from:

- Danielle Migliore, Director of Sales - USA
- Lidia Garibaldo, FIT Sales Manager - Panama
- Josefin Lagnelius, Group Sales Manager - Sweden
- Mirka Villavicencio, Senior Program Manager - Ecuador
- Danni Mei, Marketing Communications Specialist - China
- Amy Goldstein, Manager of Product Development - USA
- Carole Peck, Marketing & Product Development Coordinator - USA
- Amy Arnold, Program Manager - USA
- Diane Barney, FIT Sales Manager - USA

Beyond Times Square recognizes, appreciates and thanks these fabulous women for all they contribute to ensuring that each and every one of BTSQ's clients has the travel experience of their dreams!

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Ayelet Goldberg, Operation Manager

[The Drisco](#) - Celebrating the Women at the Core of the Hotel

Set in the center of the picturesque American-German colony in Tel Aviv, The Drisco Hotel is a pleasant respite from city life. Within this quiet environment, the hotel team advocates for the representation, diversity and empowerment of women. More than half of The Drisco's team is composed of women, each of whom is a strong, creative leader in her field.

In particular, The Drisco recognizes Maayan, Event Manager, and Ayelet, Operation Manager, who emulate what it means to be determined, accomplished and committed to high standards.

Whatever experience your client may be having at the hotel, whether it's staying in the perfect room for their taste, enjoying dinner at the award-winning George and John Restaurant, or attending a well-executed event, the women of The Drisco have worked hard to deliver personal service at the highest level.

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The women of Découvertes

[Découvertes](#) - Experiencing France Through the Lens of Women

Traveling with family, or perhaps your favorite gal pals, to France? Leave it to the experts! The moms and wives of the Découvertes team know exactly how to make everyone happy. This esteemed company recognizes the amazing women on their team who make travel dreams come true - their team is 90% female! They bring their combined intelligence and a feminine touch to create the perfect French experience for every traveler, whatever their interests or style.

For more than 25 years, Découvertes has been crafting personalized, creative itineraries within France, from art to shopping, alpine skiing to southern beach resort stays, wine tastings to getaways at country chateaux. Guests are assured 24/7 assistance and concierge service throughout their stay. So, a big shout-out to all the incredible women at Découvertes who make it all happen!