

A MODERN
GENTLEMEN DECOR

INVESTING
DOWN UNDER

THE ART OF
ECLECTICISM

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LONDON CALLING

PRIVATE AIR

LUXURY HOMES

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PROFILE: THE PURPLE PASSPORT

YOUR GUIDE TO THE HIGH LIFE

By Joseph Reaney

Wander into the travel section of any major bookstore and you'll find shelves-upon-shelves of travel guides. Yet for international jet-setters there are few that provide the requisite blend of discerning luxury and taste.

That's why more high-end travelers are heading online to discover the upmarket guide **The Purple Passport**.

Founded in 2010 by intrepid New Yorkers Jennifer Garcia-Alonso and Emily C. Brands, the company provides bright and smart online guides – and occasional e-books – to the crème de la crème of decadent global city destinations. These stylish travel guides are designed to appeal to wealthy, fashionable and savvy travelers.

We caught up with Emily and Jennifer to discover what is required to create the ultimate luxury travel guide.

What were the origins of The Purple Passport?

We (Emily and Jennifer) have been best friends since school, and have traveled internationally together ever since. During these travels, we amassed a wealth of knowledge about the best of the best across the globe.

Sitting in our offices in Manhattan, we each spent hours and hours trying to plan urban vacations. And we knew our friends and colleagues with similarly exclusive tastes were doing the same. There was no easily-accessible, comprehensive web resource out there for travelers like us: highly discerning, worldly, and fun.

Since we could not find a single online source that served all our travel needs – from hotels, to restaurants, to nightlife, to spas, to shopping, and to sights – we quickly decided we HAD to create The Purple Passport.

So what's the concept behind The Purple Passport?

The Purple Passport is a web-based collection of chic one-stop guides to experiencing global cities in style.

We personally visit everywhere we review. Our small team of 'travel taste-makers' doesn't take any form of compensation for

covering a venue for us: we pay our own way and keep our research mission hush-hush.

To date, we have launched four US city guides (Los Angeles, New York City, Palm Beach, Washington DC) and four other world city guides (Beijing, London, Paris, Taipei). Each comprehensive guide uniquely meets our travelers' needs by allowing them to discover our exclusive venue selections by mood, location, and price.

Who does luxury travel mean to you?

Our core audience is the well-traveled, sophisticated, and stylish urban enthusiast. The Purple Passport was created especially for the experienced traveler with a taste for luxury, and this is clear in everything we do.

Luxury means having your wishes taken care of, even before you know these desires exist. It



is having down comforters provided to keep us warm on airplanes; having a warm towel placed under our necks and knees during a massage; and having fresh flowers and fruit provided by the hotel throughout our stay. Luxury can be found almost anywhere: city tours, safaris, desert treks, country retreats... even camping. Our approach is to first ask "What do we really want to do?", then follow up by asking "Now how can we do this in style?"

What features make The Purple Passport unique?

There are lots of great features. The personalized Passports allow users to save their favorite venues – along with addresses and other critical information – to one easy list they can print, email, and share with friends.

The **full screen maps** allow users to focus on a neighborhood that interests them, and



see all of our selected spots there. And the **reviews** provide lots of great detail. Not only history or ambiance, [also] practicalities that can be very useful for luxury travelers, such as "What type of crowd visits this place: business travelers, families, ladies who lunch?", "What should I wear there?", and "What recommended activities are nearby?"

What does the future hold for The Purple Passport?

We cannot wait to grow. We plan to launch new city guides – Miami is next – and enhance the bookings and reservation capabilities on our site. And we would love to increase our mobile presence. We have recently launched a Washington DC guide and a Digital Postcards feature, which allows our visitors to browse images and send a virtual postcard from thousands of photos we've taken at luxury destinations around the world.

The Purple Passport's online travel guides are available at thepurplepassport.com. You can also delve into e-book versions of their most popular city guides, including London, Paris and New York, on Amazon.com.

EMILY & JENN'S TOP DESTINATIONS

- **New York City.** It doesn't get any more dynamic than NYC. Stay at the St. Regis, dine at Jean Georges, spa at the Mandarin Oriental, see the Guggenheim, shop Fifth Avenue or Soho, and drink cocktails at Rose Bar.
- **Paris.** Arguably the world capital of art and culture. Stay at the Hotel Plaza Athénée, shop St-Germain-des-Prés, and indulge in the decadent hot chocolate at Angelina, or a to-die-for lunch at Restaurant Le Meurice.
- **Palm Beach, Florida.** The ultimate winter playground for the high-end traveler. Stay at the Breakers, relax at Eau Spa, shop Worth Avenue (think Cartier, Chanel, Hermes, Saks and more), and brunch at Cafe Boulud.
- **Abu Dhabi.** Abu Dhabi is experiencing a growth in luxury tourism, with the opening of high-end hotels like St. Regis, Ritz-Carlton and Sofitel. Enjoy the desert with its deep dunes, the beaches, and the Formula One.