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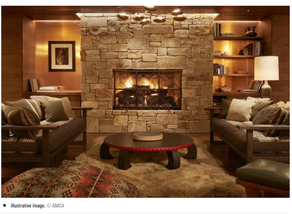
How luxury concierges are managing the crisis with their clients



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Romain Clergeat
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Premium Conciergerie boasts a portfolio of 150 clients, including businesspeople, artists, and athletes, half of whom are members of the French national football team and tennis player Lucas Pouille. Far from interrupting their operations, the Covid-19 crisis has given them almost more work than usual! Jeremy Vosse, its founder, tells us more.

Paris Match: What services are your clients requesting right now?
Jeremy Vosse: At first, it was mainly grocery shopping, finding giant TV screens, game consoles for their children, etc. Since the "real" lockdown, travel requests have accelerated considerably. Some of our clients want to get through this period in another country, preferably somewhere sunny. And it's a real headache. Because in the early days, entry to certain destinations was still possible. But as the pandemic progresses, the choices are becoming increasingly limited. For example, I have a client who wanted to go to Thailand, but we had to redirect him to Brazil. There are also countries that are still open to European citizens, but as soon as you set foot on their soil, you're sent into quarantine. In a quarantine location chosen by the country. It's not exactly the ideal vacation.

Currently, is it possible to travel outside of France without any problems by chartering a private plane?
Yes. Since the beginning of the crisis, we've done it for many clients. This is mainly because they were afraid to use regular airports. Seeing a few people at Le Bourget and walking through long corridors at Charles-de-Gaulle Airport is a completely different experience. And also because scheduled flights have become virtually nonexistent.

The story continues after this advertisement.

Did you orchestrate the departures of PSG stars Neymar, Thiago Silva, and Cavani?
No. But currently, we're trying to get some French national team players to leave; so far without success. For the reasons I explained earlier.

Jeremy Vosse. © DR

Which category of your clients have chosen this option? Are they mostly businesspeople?
No. They're primarily athletes and celebrities. Footballers, for example, once they have their club's approval, prefer to go somewhere sunny rather than stay cooped up in the city. Other athletes have asked us to find them a villa with sports equipment so they can train.

Lucas Pouille rented a villa in the south, complete with a tennis court, and said on social media how happy he was to have anticipated the lockdown. Did you arrange that?
I usually keep my clients confidential, but since Lucas mentioned it... But he's not the only one. Other athletes have made similar requests. Some didn't need a tennis court, but rather weight training equipment.

The story continues after this advertisement.

How do you find them equipment when all the shops are closed?
We manage. It's our job. We have very good relationships with several sports facilities and large hotels, whose gyms are currently deserted. This allowed us to acquire machines that the hotels weren't using right now, due to a lack of guests.

You also work with artists. How do you handle it if a musician asks you for a specific instrument?
We proceed in a similar way. We search among private individuals.

> *The most difficult clients are those who have suddenly become rich.*

Have you noticed that villa owners, for example, are taking advantage of the situation to inflate prices?
Some are trying. But in any case, it's also our role to ensure we get the best price for our clients. We make it clear to those we're dealing with that it's in their best interest to have an occupied villa, rather than the other way around. And if the rental price was 100 last week, we offer 50, telling them it's a bargain. And that if they don't agree, we'll find someone else.

In "normal" times, how does your concierge service work?
We have a family subscription that can be used by six people for €9,600 per year. These are individuals, as well as what we call major accounts—brands. They can ask us for anything, anywhere in the world, as long as it's legal. It ranges from the most mundane things, like going grocery shopping. And since the lockdown, demand has skyrocketed. We've even found extremely rare watches, for which there's a four-year waiting list, but which we manage to deliver to the client between five and nine days after their request. Or we can organize a month-long round-the-world trip in... two days. To be able to do that, you obviously need a well-established network, which takes years to build.

Who are the most difficult clients?
People often think it's footballers because they earn a lot of money at a very young age, but that's not the case. In reality, our role isn't to manage their whims but rather to advise them. I remember, for example, a player who asked me to find him a private jet to go to Los Angeles to attend a basketball game. The operation would have cost €200,000; he could afford it, but it was somewhat absurd. I advised him instead to fly first class, for equivalent comfort, and to keep the money he would have spent to rent a superb villa for his next vacation. The most difficult clients are those who have suddenly become rich, having sold their company for a huge sum. They discover what money can buy and sometimes start behaving a bit capriciously. To be perfectly honest, it's mostly their network, their partner, or their friends who start to get a big head instead of the client. But that remains a minority. Thankfully! ■

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