



*Melanie Alexander*

| By Natalie King  
Photos by Aram O. Photography

Dreams of relaxation, opulence and exploration in travel are made possible because of The MAAC Group, a marketing and sales consulting firm specializing in luxury travel, hospitality and real estate. The ambition and dedication to the luxury travel industry is evident within moments of meeting Melanie Alexander, founder of The MAAC Group. She is frequently on the go, traveling to one of the many destinations that she works with, finding new advancements and ways to successfully market the properties that she represents.

**M**elanie finished college in three years, graduated cum laude, and took the next year to live in Greece, which remains one of her favorite places to visit. She started her career at an advertising agency in New York City, then fused her professional experience with her love of travel and spent three years marketing Jamaica, where she had her first taste of luxury hotels and resorts.

Making a unique career move, she left the U.S. again, and embarked on a trip to 19 countries and 5 continents alone. When asked about her most notable experiences abroad she says, “I went to a cremation ceremony in Bali, was invited to a wedding in Zanzibar, and stayed in a castle in Scotland.” Navigating through the various countries alone was surprisingly effortless for Melanie, who learned to rely on what may be her greatest skill, her instincts.

After she settled back in New York, she learned about e-commerce, and collaborated with some of the greatest talents in public relations, design and marketing. Many of these collaborations make up her current list of associates, hailing as far away as Macedonia, for her Boston-based consultancy. “Perhaps the most reliable asset in my professional and personal life has been to trust my instincts. This has led me to make sound choices in my career, to keep my client base selective, and to have a great appreciation and understanding of what will best represent my clients to the luxury travel market.”

This understanding of luxury travel has led Melanie and The MAAC Group to increase tourism on all corners of the globe. In her first two years in business, she increased passenger arrivals by 20% in Turks & Caicos, later increased room night sales by 50% at the Coral Stone Club in Grand Cayman, and helped the country of Zambia elevate their level of tourism. Presently she is working with the tourism board and hotels of Martinique, to direct them through a new phase of development of exclusive boutique hotels and increased airlift.

Melanie’s experience in design at the start of her career in New York City has proven to be an asset to her current projects, where she is creating logos and brand identification for Luxury Investment Properties, a company representing elite residences in Italy, France and Spain. This is a major undertaking, essentially putting the design team in the position to encapsulate the integrity and style of the client, capturing their most extraordinary elements into a singular image.

More recently, she has learned first-hand about travel with children, through her two beautiful daughters under the age of 3. Family travel can sometimes be tricky if you are not staying at a resort or hotel conducive to a family vacation. “I love that people are always asking me about travel advice,” says Melanie. “I think that the Cayman Islands are great for family travel. The resorts provide a luxurious setting for the parents, but there are great features — such as access to a grocery store so that you can pick up juice and foods for the kids, along with anything that you may need for them — that truly makes it group-friendly.” She adds, “For honeymooners, Martinique is amazing. This is a unique destination that combines lush typography, tranquility and beautiful beaches with culture and exceptional cuisine, including two casinos.”

Her next project will be to help a converted farmhouse with 20 units in southern Europe, while she continues her travels and plans a wedding. We met for tea at the Henderson House in Weston, Massachusetts where Melanie is due to marry her husband-to-be in August. The Henderson House is a sprawling English Tudor-style estate that sits in a commanding presence atop a hill overlooking a beautiful expanse of trees. The manicured lawn and formality of the exterior is quite different than what you expect to find inside. Though there is obvious glamour seen in the elegant double staircase and various crystal chandeliers, the design inside the Henderson House is surprisingly simplistic and relaxed. We were greeted warmly and led to a cozy and inviting room, complete with classic furnishings and a window that fills the room with morning light. As we talk about her wedding plans, it is evident the Henderson House is a reflection of her personality. Though there is luxury and grandeur present, the overall feeling of the Henderson House is that of a very effortless and inviting space. Her main objective of the wedding is for her loved ones to simply have an enjoyable, fun evening.

Perhaps the most notable characteristic of Melanie is that she is incredibly down-to-earth. She speaks about travel to her client’s properties as though she is continually recounting the adoration and wonder that she saw in them on her first visit. Her passion for travel and discovery has not wavered since her first journey through Greece, and years later through 19 countries around the globe. She conducts her business with elegance, while her vivacious outlook on life and travel is one to admire. Though many people are fortunate to achieve success, it is rare to come across someone that remains grounded as she navigates through her many accomplishments and achievements.

Did she imagine, as a recent graduate working in an office in New York City, that she would one day pack up, travel the world ... then move to Boston and open a successful marketing/sales firm specializing in luxury travel? For her, she says the key was setting smaller personal goals while remaining optimistic about her aspirations. “What has proven to work for me is to decide on small steps that I would like to accomplish, and then the big picture is realized as a result of hard work and following my instincts”.

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