

Travel Bug

Lindsey Epperly is taking over the travel industry one trip at a time.

As the owner of Epperly Travel, **Lindsey Epperly** creates luxe, personalized itineraries for her clients. But she didn't always have such a clear route for her career. "I wandered into a travel agency for a brochure and walked out with a job planning honeymoons," says the ubersuccessful 26-year-old. "I was a college student—not vying for a career path—but something bigger than I could've ever imagined was set into motion."

And though her original road map did not include a stop in the travel industry (she graduated from UGA with a B.A. in English), it didn't take long to discover that it was her dream destination.

"All it took to fall in love with travel consulting was to help my first honeymoon couple book a getaway that fit them perfectly," she gushes. "I will never forget that feeling; I still get it when clients return from a vacation that we've put together and thank us for an experience that they couldn't have achieved on their own."

Five years later, the honeymoon connoisseur has become Atlanta's go-to guide for 4- and 5-star luxury leisure trips across the globe. She set out on her own in 2011 to create Vacations by Lindsey, then rebranded her biz as Epperly Travel last year. As a national affiliate of Century Travel, her swanky empire is racking up awards and accolades from the likes of *Forbes* and *Travel Agent*, but Epperly is staying as grounded as ever.

"I started Epperly Travel because I saw a need for transparency in the industry," she says. "I was constantly faced with clients who were afraid of hidden fees and unethical practices—oftentimes rightfully founded. I built my business by doing the opposite of what I saw less ethical travel agencies doing, and that resonated with clients."

To help match those clients with their perfect destinations, Epperly has done her research. "I'm humbled by the travel opportunities I've received, from wine tasting in the vineyards of Tuscany to waking up to baboons jumping on the roof of my villa in South Africa."

The company recently partnered with New Story, an Atlanta-based organization dedicated to rebuilding homes in Haiti. "We've pledged to donate proceeds from every trip we book until we've built a home there. I can't wait to share with our clients what a difference their travels have made in the lives of others!"

Epperly has also expanded into new markets, including Nashville, Tenn., and her hometown of Columbus, Ga..

"I grew up having conversations at the dinner table about ethics and best practices that have firmly influenced the way I do business," she says. "My parents poured into me the values that I live by today, which, mixed with my own untamable drive, have made me who I am. There are days when being an entrepreneur and leader are the hardest roles, but I know I'm the best version of myself when I'm in them, focused on watching my team succeed and turning dream vacations into a reality."

@lindsey_epperly —Alison Abbey

Epperly's enterprise won WVTM's best all-around travel agency, and she nabbed a spot on "Travel Agent's 30 Under 30 list at the ripe age of 21!