

## The Graduation Trip of a Lifetime: A Custom Family Vacation in Paris and London

Kelly and Tom Lykos, and their daughter, Danielle, had never been to Europe. But 2018 was special—the year their youngest child would be graduating from high school. And that child had a deep desire—along with her parents—to see Paris, France. *“Planning began at the end of Danielle’s sophomore year, I believe,”* said Tom. *“We quickly realized that to do everything the right way, we would need specific expertise.”* That’s when Tom reached out to Rodney and Lisa George, Founders of Luxe Travel Consultants.

Tom had known Rodney professionally for four years and had enlisted him to help with a bucket list trip to celebrate his 50th birthday in Mexico learning about the Mayan ruins. *“That was one of the best trips I have ever been on, so I knew it was time to go back to him.”*

Rodney and his wife, Lisa, knew they could create the one-of-a-kind experience the Lykos family was looking for. After meeting to discuss the “musts” and “would be nice to dos” of the trip, Rodney and Lisa quickly got to work.

*“One of the first things they suggested after really listening to our interests and desires was that we extend our trip,”* said Kelly. *“They said don’t go to Europe for 10 days, go for a full two weeks and do France and London. It was one of the best decisions we have ever made.”* Almost 14 months after initially meeting with Rodney, Tom, Kelly, Danielle, and Danielle’s boyfriend, Nicholas, boarded a plane for the trip of a lifetime.

### The Trip

Four individuals ranging in age from 17 to 54 with interests as diverse as architecture, construction, architectural materials, history, and horses headed to Europe for the first time without any anxiety or stress. *“I’m always nervous as we are traveling someplace new, especially about logistics,”* said Kelly. *“And it usually falls on Tom to ensure we have tickets to everything, we know where we are going, etc. It was nice to not have to worry about any of that and just be present to the experiences.”*

Tom echoed his wife’s sentiment: *“I have never taken a two-week vacation; these experiences and that time with my family...that was the true gift.”*

### The Challenges and Solutions

Challenges are part and parcel of overseas travel. It’s why travelers continue to rely on experts like Rodney and Lisa George of Luxe Travel Consultants to plan experiences. The Lykos’ trip was no different.

• **The List:** The Lykos family had a long list of things they wanted to see and do. *“Rodney made it even longer with his wonderful suggestions,”* Kelly said, laughing. Rodney tackled the list one-by-one and provided advice on what they should spend time on and what is better saved for a later trip. *“The fact that he had been to all these places was invaluable,”* said Tom. *“He knew exactly how much time to spend in each place so that the timing and transition from one activity to the next—and one location to the next—was seamless. We got to see and do everything we wanted—and more—which was unbelievable.”*

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- **Safety:** As first-time European travelers, safety was a top priority for the Lykos family.

*"Rodney has connections all over the world, and that, in and of itself, made us feel taken care of,"* said Kelly.

The family had a folder at each location and day-by-day, hour-by-hour detailed itineraries including contingency plans so they knew they were in good hands at all times.

*"Plus, our guides and drivers seemed to be in communication with one another,"* said Tom. *"It was as if they would anticipate our questions or concerns and allay any fears."*

- **The Dual Trip Day:** One of the days required extra planning. Danielle and Nicholas wanted to go horseback riding in the English countryside, while Tom and Kelly wanted to explore Oxford and Stonehenge.

*"Even this day was seamless,"* notes Kelly. *"The guides made sure I was comfortable with the plan and transportation for Danielle and Nicholas for the day so Tom and I could relax and enjoy our own adventure. This, too, is a testament to the detailed efforts that Rodney exerted on our behalf."*

### The Experience

All four travelers agreed that it was an unbelievable trip—and one they will remember for a lifetime. They each had their favorite moments, though. For Tom, it was seeing Mont Saint Michel and all of the historical architecture. For Kelly, it was the emotional time spent in Normandy. Nicholas loved the James

Bond-esque speed boat experience on the Thames River, and Danielle loved the insider-only viewing of the changing of the guard.

*"Most people think that the front of Buckingham Palace is the best place to see the changing of the guard,"* she said. *"Rodney actually knew the best place. Our guide took us to this little-known spot to the side where the changing of the guard ceremony really begins. Here, we could actually interact with the guards and it was amazing."*

Kelly agrees that this insider knowledge from someone who had "been there, done that," absolutely made the trip. *"We had personalized guides, drivers who knew shortcuts, we got right to the front of the line,"* she said. *"This saved us probably days in time when you add it all up so we got to do more, experience more, and learn more."*

Tom says it was a trip he will never forget for many, many reasons, not the least of which was the customization. *"This trip was planned for us—specifically and seamlessly. From the activities on our list to the hours allotted for wandering to find a great café for lunch and immerse ourselves in the culture, Rodney really listened to us and somehow made it all come together flawlessly."*

The family now says they have the travel bug. *"This trip opened our eyes to how much there is to explore and see,"* said Kelly. *"Rodney will be getting a lot more calls from us. Its been fun to talk about future trips as a family while reliving the memories of this one!"*