

# The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD

## THE VIP LOUNGE

# Revs defender dreams of Jamaica, surfing in Hawaii, and one day playing soccer in Europe

**D**eJuan Jones is having quite a season as a New England Revolution defender, with one goal and three assists (stats usually reserved for offensive players) so far this year. He has also started in all but three games. And while the Lansing, Mich., native puts his all into his sport during the season, his off-season travels take him to Montego Bay, Jamaica, where “the weather is amazing, but the people are even better.” Jones, who is in his third season with the Revs, said he enjoys living in Boston’s South End and all the city has to offer, but hopes to make a move to Europe to play soccer — Manchester United in England is his dream team — someday. “But I wouldn’t want to play for another MLS [Major League Soccer] team,” said the 24-year-old Michigan State grad. “If I don’t go to Europe, I want to stay here with this team and my teammates.” We caught up with Jones to talk about all things travel.

**Favorite vacation destination?** Montego Bay, Jamaica. The weather is amazing, but the people are even better. Beautiful views and plenty of places to explore.

**Favorite food or drink while vacationing?** Whatever the locals are eating — and a virgin pina colada for sure.

**Where would you like to travel to but haven’t?** I would love to go surfing in Hawaii. Hawaii has always been on my list and surfing looks like a fun challenge.

**One item you can’t leave home without when traveling?** A book. I love reading; always need to have a book with me. I like books about sports and being mentally tough . . . self-improvement books.

**Aisle or window?** Window. Better views and I do not have to worry about someone in the aisle bumping into me as they walk by.

**Favorite childhood travel memory?** Family road trip to Universal Studios when I was 8. The ride down was long but I loved spending that time with my family [parents and two older sisters] and playing my PlayStation 2 on the TV in the van. We met up with my grandparents, uncle, and cousins, and enjoyed the amusement park.

**Guilty pleasure when traveling?** Eating sweets — especially cookies. Snickerdoodle and chocolate chip are my favorites. I try to eat pretty clean and healthy, but I give myself a vacation pass to enjoy.

**Best travel tip?** Step out of your comfort zone. The whole point of traveling is to experience a unique culture. Do not be afraid to try new foods, meet new people, and have fun!

JULIET PENNINGTON



DeJuan Jones on an ATV in Montego Bay in Jamaica.



## HERE

### NEW DIGS IN OLD PORT

Folks who love Portland’s Old Port neighborhood’s many charms — including one-of-a-kind shops, chef-owned restaurants, craft and art galleries — have a new place to stay in this historic part of town. Canopy by Hilton Portland Waterfront, the first Hilton lifestyle hotel to open in New England, just made its grand debut on the corner of Center and Commercial streets. Home to 135 sleek and stylish rooms and suites, outfitted with Cuddledown bedding and Evangeline Linen blankets, the property also boasts two restaurants and bars (Luna Rooftop Bar and Salt Yard Café + Bar); a retail shop featuring curated products from Maine artisans; complimentary bikes for exploring the city; a 24-hour fitness center with Peloton bikes and Technogym equipment; and more. A pet-friendly program, Canopy’s Paws in the Neighborhood, provides a pup-friendly guide to Portland, as well as special treats and a Just-Right LL Bean dog bed for your four-legged family member. Rates from \$449. 207-

791-5000, [www.hilton.com/en/hotels/pwmoppy-canopy-portland-waterfront](http://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/pwmoppy-canopy-portland-waterfront)

### \$100 GIFT CARD FOR TWO-NIGHT STAYS

Take advantage of GoProvidence’s new getaway packages and receive a \$100 GoProvidence Pass Visa Rewards Card. The recently launched program aims to boost spending at Rhode Island small businesses as they recover from the pandemic. Simply book a two-night stay at one of many participating hotels linked on the website, and spend your newfound loot at approximately 80 lo-



cal restaurants, retail stores and attractions including the John Brown House Museum and the Roger Williams Park Zoo & Carousel Village. End dates vary per hotel. [www.goprovidence.com/goprovidencepass](http://www.goprovidence.com/goprovidencepass)

## THERE

### PRETTY IN PINK

Plan your fall or winter escape now to The Don CeSar, a beloved Gulf Coast icon that originally opened in 1928 in St. Pete Beach, Fla. Affectionately known as the “Pink Palace,” the beachfront resort recently unveiled top-to-bottom multimillion-dollar renovations throughout the expansive property, including its 277 guestrooms and suites, two-story luxury penthouse, six restaurants, two pools, destination spa, boutique shopping experiences and public spaces. Half a mile down the sugary white sand coast, 71 Beach House Suites are ideal for families or groups of friends who want extended stay comfort and home-like amenities. Rates from \$399. 844-338-1501, [www.doncesar.com](http://www.doncesar.com)

### STARS OVER SHANGHAI

It’s a long way from home but worth reporting that a monumental new museum debuted in China this summer. At 420,000 square feet, the astronomical branch of the Shanghai Science and Technology Museum is said to be the largest museum in the world solely dedicated to the study of astronomy. Designed by international architecture firm Ennead Architects, the museum creates immersive experiences that place visitors in direct engagement with real astronomical phenomena. In addition, each of the three principal architectural components that define the design — the Oculus,

Inverted Dome and Sphere — act as functioning astronomical instruments, tracking the sun, moon and stars. [en.sstm.org.cn](http://en.sstm.org.cn)

## EVERYWHERE

### GIFTS FOR AVIATION AND TRAVEL LOVERS

Airport geeks can now get flight recorder, airport code, and boarding pass-themed Apple custom watchbands from Airportag, a website for contemporary-designed aviation-inspired gear. The stylish new watchbands join a family of products that include backpacks and other bags; passport covers; luggage tags; bath and bed items; T-shirts and hoodies; tech gear; mousepads and stickers; wall art and more. Some items can be personalized to memorialize your favorite trips. (BOS > MIA Boarding Pass Throw Pillow, anyone?) Take advantage of sales and new releases offered daily. [airportag.com](http://airportag.com)

### SUMMER SIPS

Picnic season is in full swing, and curated wine-tasting website In Good Taste is offering single-serve bottles to take along on your pond-side, mountain-side, and beach excursions. You say you like rosé and your bestie prefers white wine? The new Summer Sips Collection features a four-pack variety of rosés and/or white wines from California and the south of France. The single-serve bottles offer an opportunity to try new varieties or have a glass without opening a full bottle. It also avoids weighing down your picnic basket with multiple bottles of vino, leaving more room for your favorite gastronomic treats. [ingoodtaste.com/pages/summer-sips](http://ingoodtaste.com/pages/summer-sips)

NECEE REGIS

## TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER

# Can I reschedule my Africa tour, or will I lose my money?

By Christopher Elliott  
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

**Q.** Almost two years ago, I booked an Africa trip through Vantage Travel, which was supposed to depart in June 2020. Vantage canceled the trip because of COVID-19. The company re-registered me with the same group, scheduled to leave in September of that year. When I asked why Vantage didn’t give me any other options or offer a refund, a representative told me she assumed I would just go along with the group.

I requested a refund, but Vantage said it wasn’t giving refunds. I found out later that some customers did, in fact, receive refunds.

Vantage also canceled the September trip. In November, I had cervical spine surgery and quite possibly will need additional surgery down the road. In March, I was involved in a horrendous automobile accident, caused by what the doctors believe was a heart attack. With this accident, I can’t leave North America, so a trip to Africa would be impossible.

I’ve asked Vantage for a refund or a change to a North American trip, but I can’t get through to anyone. Can you help me?

RICK KNEE, *Davie, Fla.*

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**A.** I’m sorry to hear about your health problems. I think Vantage should have offered you a full refund after canceling your first trip to Africa. Most reputable tour operators offered full refunds when they had to cancel their trips. But you would have had a limited time to either accept the tour or get rebooked on a future tour. So when the representative told you that Vantage “assumed” you wanted to go on the September tour, that’s probably what happened.

It’s difficult to determine the sequence of events, because your paper trail of correspondence with the company is incomplete. It looks as if a lot of your communication happened by phone. Companies keep recordings of these calls, but they aren’t accessible to you without a court order.

After you accept the credit — either directly or indirectly by not responding to an offer — you’re stuck with it. But even then, there are ways out. Under Massachusetts state law, a tour operator must offer a refund when it cancels a trip. You could have tried to invoke that law after Vantage repeatedly canceled your trip, since Vantage is a Massachusetts company.

I list the names, numbers and email addresses of all the Vantage executives on my consumer advocacy site at [www.elliott.org/company-contacts/vantage-deluxe-world-travel/](http://www.elliott.org/company-contacts/vantage-deluxe-world-travel/). I see you tried to send an e-mail to the CEO, but you might have first tried to contact someone at a lower level with a specific request for either a refund or an itinerary change. It was difficult to determine what you wanted, based on the letter you sent to Vantage. I suggested that you send a more focused e-mail to Vantage. Separately, I contacted Vantage on your behalf.

It turns out Vantage has a standard policy that guests can move their trip to either a different departure date of the same trip or a different trip altogether up to 121 days before their scheduled departure date without penalty. No special approval is needed.

Vantage changed your tour as you requested, and you agreed to accept its offer.

*Christopher Elliott is the chief advocacy officer of Elliott Advocacy, a non-profit organization that helps consumers resolve their problems. Elliott’s latest book is “How To Be The World’s Smartest Traveler” (National Geographic). Contact him at [elliott.org/help](mailto:elliott.org/help) or [chris@elliott.org](mailto:chris@elliott.org).*