

## INDONESIA

## Bali three-in-one package

BACKYARD TRAVEL COMBINES THREE outdoor activities into one, with a new package in Bali in which you raft, bike and jeep around the holiday island.

Highlights of the tour feature whitewater rafting over rapids and under waterfalls in the foothills of Mt Agung, hiking up to the volcanic

Bratan lake 1,200m above sea level and riding a jeep deep into the mountains.

The terraced rice padi surroundings of Ubud are the emerald green backdrop for much of this adventurous segment of the programme.

Then the tone changes with a trip to a Balinese spa for a session with a conscience, with

proceeds going to a local charity that works with disadvantaged families.

Last come visits to clove and coffee plantations, where you can settle down with a cuppa to look back on a few adrenaline-filled days.

This four-day package costs US\$475 per person. To book, go to [www.backyardtravel.com](http://www.backyardtravel.com)



## Q&A: Andrea Oschetti, Blueflower

**Tell us something about yourself and who inspired you to get out there and travel.**

I was born in Milan, Italy. When I was a child, I travelled in my imagination by reading a number of books like Emilio Salgari's "Adventures in the Old West", Jules Verne's "Around the World in 80 Days", Charles Dodgson's "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" and one of my favourites: Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings".

**How do you try to understand a place better before visiting? You seem to do a lot of reading fiction and travel books, for instance . . .**

Definitely. Books have the power to unlock the meaning of a destination. Through them, we are able to discover the nuances of places, characters of people and hidden components that are not visible in the travel guides. They give us not just a fantastic idea about the place but also help us open doors to the world of becoming a traveller.

**Why did you name your travel company Blueflower? What is the philosophy behind it?**

The Blue Flower is a central symbol of Romanticism, a movement in the arts emphasising inspiration by a creative impulse. Its myth refers to a sensitive aesthete – the beautiful soul – forever longing for personal fulfillment.

We offer life-enriching journeys curated by a collective of extraordinary individuals. Using a journalistic approach, we dig deeper to craft your journey into a story that only you can tell.

We are a network of journalists, chefs, sommeliers, historians, artists, writers and explorers that act as travel mentors to help clients connect with the spirit of a destination.

As travel mentors, we're passionate about recognising the details that matter to each individual and creating something truly unique that adds meaning to your life.

We also want to nurture a community of travellers through our Wanderer Club and Travel Salon, a space where minds meet and travel tales can be shared, sparking ideas for future trips. We'll host intimate TED-style talks and dinners with inspiring speakers here, and encourage attendees to share their own experiences and knowledge.

**You say that bespoke travel has lost its meaning? How do we reclaim it?**

Bespoke became an empty word as it has been used by so many people as a marketing commodity. If you look at what's behind it, you would discover that instead of a tailor-made product, you have actually been given a *pret-a-porter*, an off-the-shelf trip.

What I see people looking for today is a travel mentor: someone with not only knowledge, expertise and connection, but an understanding of what matters to that person, what will help them achieve their goals through life-changing travel experiences.

**Who do you expect your clientele to be?**

Someone like me. I started Blueflower with my travel needs in mind. My travel aspirations were always ambitious and I never used a travel agency. The more ambitious I was, the more I saw how challenging it can be to create these kinds of trips.

Luckily, I had the connections of a journalist on assignment for a leading newspaper, where I could devote a lot of time just planning a trip. I believe that many people want to do similar travels but they don't have the time or the

connection to make them a reality.

**Which Blueflower trip would you most like to do as a client?**

The trip I would most like to do is to travel to the Tibetan enclaves in Yunnan, by caravan. It's a trip for those seeking a complete disconnection from the world of today; a trip to rediscover the art of travelling; a trip inspired by early 20th-century explorers.

The beginning of the journey is Shangri-La, where the programme is designed to immerse you in the atmosphere of James Hilton's "Lost Horizon". You hike in the holy mountains, through rhododendron forests and between snowy peaks, camping and being looked-after Tibetan-style, but sleeping in real beds. You share the life of the Tibetans from the Dabois valley and visit Kawa Karpo, one of the most sacred mountains for Tibetan Buddhism. There you hike a section of the famed pilgrimage route, while staying in an ecotourism lodge. Best of all, you spend your days with locals.

*For more information, visit [blueflower.la](http://blueflower.la)*

