



THE GETAWAY | STEPHANIE ROSENBLOOM

Leaving on a (Private) Jet Plane

A handful of new players make booking as easy as ordering up a private car.

IN LESS TIME than it takes to undergo a body scan, I breezed through the terminal and onto the tarmac.

No one at Teterboro Airport, in low-slung industrial New Jersey, asked for my driver's license. No one rifled through my bag. There were no screaming children or grown-ups in pajama bottoms wheeling luggage the size of fat steamer trunks. It was strangely serene: only the sound of the wind and the tap of my heels on the runway as I walked toward two pilots at the foot of a Challenger 300, a gleaming private jet with seating for nine. I stepped onto a swatch of blue carpet beneath the air stair and, steadied by a pilot's hand, at long last boarded a plane like a human being, not a pack mule.

Inside, the pilot in command, Rob Martin of XOJet, a private jet company based in San Francisco, went over the essentials: the iPod dock; the touch screen to control the lights and movies; the leather swivel seats that I was told (while treating mine like a Tilt-a-Whirl) cost \$30,000 to replace; the satellite phone; the Nespresso machine; the cabinet with the Oreo cookies and Kistler chardonnay.

"One thing I forgot to mention," Mr. Martin said before we took off, "the couch will fold out into a bed."

At a time when industry surveys show that travelers are fed up with epic lines at commercial airports, when lounges are overflowing with airline-branded credit card holders, and first class is but a shadow of what it was in the golden age of air travel, companies are making private jets easier to come by. What had been an industry that relied on full or partial ownership of planes is opening up, with jet operators and owners like XOJet offering more flexible programs, and brokers who don't own planes working in tandem with them to offer seats — in some cases through apps — within striking distance of the price of a first class ticket.

"The industry has literally changed 180 degrees in the last five years," said Bill Papariella, an aviation executive who worked at NetJets, Marquis Jet, and Sentient before becoming a founder and president of the operator Jet Edge International. Companies that survived the recession have made pricing simpler and now offer

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# The Mysteries of Istria

Uncovering the soul of this region of Croatia through its most characteristic wine.

By ROBERT DRAPER

On a recent afternoon, I found myself having lunch on a shaded patio about 20 feet from the banks of a placid river that empties out into the Adriatic Sea. The restaurant, Martin Pescador — named for the bird that skims the water's surface in search of food — is in Trget, a fishing village in the region of northern Croatia known as Istria. I'd arrived there after a rough drive down a 10-mile road that hugs the Rasa River and then traverses railroad tracks and freight depots and lumberyards before dead-ending in Trget. Docked nearby were about 20 boats, the same number as residents of the village.



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Most of the other lunch patrons were locals with shaggy eyebrows and barnacled hands. At one point, the chef announced that more mussels were needed. A fisherman pushed himself out of his chair, strolled to the dock, hauled up two yellow nets full of the shellfish, and brought them into the kitchen.

The waiter presented me with a bucket of the day's catch. I selected the sarago, a sweet, fleshy white fish. It arrived perfectly grilled, following a chilled cuttlefish and squid salad and a bowl of tagliatelle with mussels, generously splashed with a brilliant local olive oil.

Oh, and he also brought out a carafe of white wine known as malvasia istriana, produced by a local winemaker named Frank Arman. Its color was limpid gold, and it possessed a subtle saltiness that rippled down my throat. In the sparkling little

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