

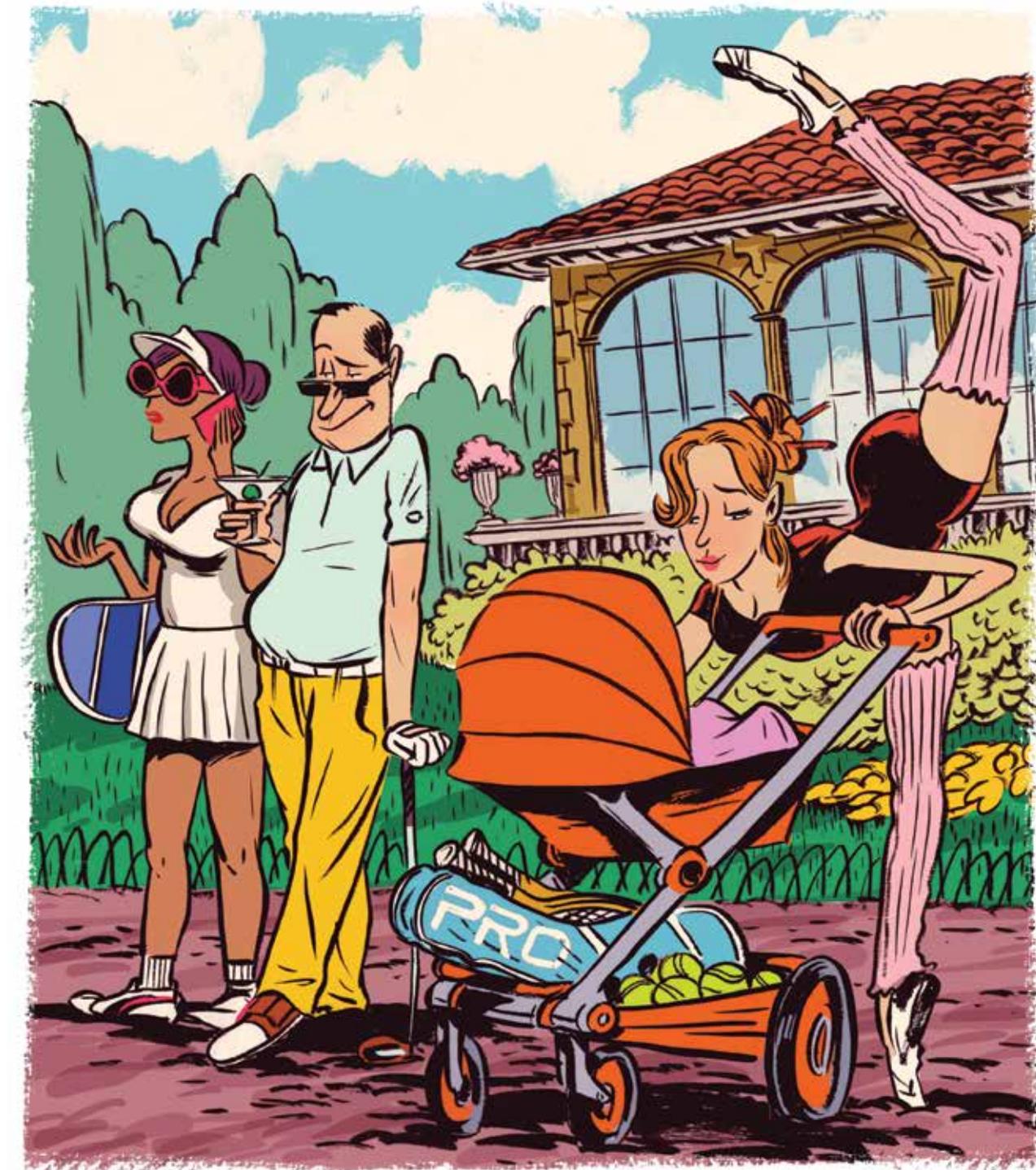
# HOW HOLLYWOOD'S ELITE STAFF UP AT HOME

Multiskilled nannies are in and strict British nannies are out, as agencies staffing the town's top households meet special challenges: 'If an unhappy housekeeper works for an A-lister, I can't present her to a new employer who is in business with her old one' By Sharon Swart

IT CAN SEEM INCONGRUOUS for butlers to operate in a town where yoga pants are worn to meetings, but industry players do have their version of *Downton Abbey*. Among the L.A. entertainment set, there are hundreds of high net worth households that employ multiple members of staff. "People live large here," says **Christopher Baker** of Christopher Baker Staffing, whose clients possess "Forbes 400-level wealth." A staff can cost \$200,000 to \$300,000 or more a year. "The \$5 million to \$10 million [earners] can do that," says a business manager of mega clients. NDAs are standard, staff size and titles vary, but in general, Hollywood's domestic help falls in a hierarchy.

## ESTATE MANAGERS

The estate manager (or house manager if there's just one home) is "like a GM of a luxury hotel — they run the show: staff, events, renovations," says Baker. Estate managers report to the "principal," or homeowner, and from a fiscal standpoint, to a business manager or family office. Hollywood business managers rely on staffing agencies to fill this critical position (and many others). Among those most mentioned are The Help Co. and The Elizabeth Rose Agency. "In L.A., the agencies are more relaxed," says **Mario Seiler**, an estate management specialist at luxury lifestyle consultancy Majordomo. "Europe is more focused on requiring five to 10 years experience, whereas in L.A., [a flexible] attitude is key." Agency fees can start at about 15 percent of an employee's income (estate managers take home a salary of \$100,000 or more). Estate Managers Coalition president **Bryan Peele** says they can also receive "a 10 percent cash bonus." (Other full-time staff can get a week's salary for every year in service. "Cars, trips, college tuition, gym



memberships are also given," says The Help Co.'s **Claudia Kahn**.)

Not that estate managers don't earn their keep. The requests can range from obsessive (ensuring that a different scent wafts in each room) to obnoxious. "My favorite," says an employee, "is the principal who had her male estate manager

— who was her shoe size — wear her new Manolo Blahniks in the house to break them in."

## PRIVATE CHEFS

Private-chef services range from drop-off meals to on-call and 24/7 availability with salaries varying widely (\$70,000 to \$120,000 or

higher), depending on experience and requested services. "A typical client wants snacks stocked in the fridge and a two- to three-course hot, healthy meal prepared," says Kahn, noting farm-to-table, gluten-free and vegan meals are popular. "For the supermodel trophy wives and boyfriends, everything has to

be measured,” adds Baker. “They obsess about every molecule that goes into their bodies.” One chef got sacked because his pancakes weren’t perfect. Another was fired for cutting carrots the wrong way. Road testing a chef at a day rate (\$250 to \$500) is a good idea, Kahn suggests. “Most chefs have their own wish lists. They don’t want to cook a chicken breast every day.”

**HOUSEKEEPERS**

“If you’re providing excellent service, it’s your job to know the best non-toxic cleaning supplies,” says Peele of top full-time housekeepers (who, if experienced, legal, English-speaking and car-owning, can start at \$20 an hour). The rule for staff size is “one housekeeper for every 4,000 square feet,” says The Grapevine’s **Rachel Sheer**, who founded the agency after working on **Kevin Huvane**’s desk at CAA. Kahn says that she’s seen an increased formalization due to the rise of McMansions and yachts. “It is more common for clients to have their staff trained by a butler,” she says. Uniforms are often called for, but “old-fashioned black and whites are passe,” says Kahn. “Everyone may wear khaki shorts, polo shirts and espadrilles as a household look,” adds Peele.

The most frequent request is for staff to be available around the clock. But, says a staffer who has worked for multiple industry

clients: “The word ‘flexibility’ in a job description means they want you overtime 24/7, but for a flat salary.” This year, however, California laws are tightening surrounding domestic employees who are supposed to be earning by the hour and receive overtime, making live-in housekeepers a scarcity.

Unsurprisingly, in a town where the predominant business is show business, principals with bad reps create challenges, says Baker. “If an unhappy housekeeper works for an A-lister, I can’t present her to a new employer who may be in business with her old one. I need to be savvy of who’s doing what and where.”

**NANNIES**

Need a nanny? You’re in the right place. “If you’re looking for a college-educated, athletic and well-traveled nanny, the choices are greater in L.A. than almost anywhere else,” says Baker, who notes that the New York elite often dip into the L.A. nanny pool. The norm of having a full-time nanny five days a week and an on-call babysitter on weekends is morphing into two rotating full-time nannies seven days a week, says Elizabeth Rose Agency’s **Julie Swales**, whose clients include working CAA and UTA moms. After placing a nanny (some of whom fetch \$30 an hour, plus health benefits and an SUV for safe kid transport), Swales often stays involved as an adviser:



“Imagine the dynamics of a mom who’s dealing with postpartum blues, has to get back to work and doesn’t want a nanny, but needs her.”

Agents all note an increase in requests for nannies knowledgeable in attachment parenting and RIE (Resources for Infant Educators). Adds Westside Nannies’ **Katie Provinziano**: “Clients ask me if I could find a nanny who may have been a pro-level tennis player. You’ll have parents asking for a ballerina if their daughter is into ballet.” Nannies who eschew the use of gender pronouns are also in demand. “There’s a gender conversation going on now,” says Swales. “They look for nannies who will let a little boy wear a sister’s tutu to school.” But the trend toward

younger nannies has slowed: “The [alleged] **Ben Affleck** nanny affair scandal didn’t help,” says an agent. “I got calls from clients saying they don’t want anyone under 35.” And the strict British nanny is no longer in vogue: Only “a Chinese bazillionaire or the Saudis might love that,” says Baker. The invisible nanny, however, is still going strong, as celeb moms feel pressure to appear as if they’re doing it all, with personal assistants also doing nanny duties (as **Gwyneth Paltrow**’s are said to do) or staying out of lens range when traipsing with the brood through LAX (**Angelina Jolie**). As Provinziano puts it: “You need to give up your life a bit, do anything necessary to make this family’s life happen.” **VH1**

**CONCIERGE L.A.**

*14 get-anything, do-everything, ultra-VIP fixers cater to every whim of the uber-wealthy* By Lesley McKenzie

**PERSONAL PAPARAZZO**

Rocket Pictures’ co-founder **David Furnish** recently turned to Los Angeles-based photographer **Kevin Kendrick** to photograph him, husband **Elton John** and their two sons. “The look of joy on Elton’s face as he thumbed through the album of our beautiful sons was a memory that our family will treasure forever,” says Furnish. For the past decade, Kendrick has documented intimate family moments for his star-studded client list (starting at \$2,995 a day). The lensman, who is ready to hop on a plane at a moment’s notice, also tags along on vacations (a four-day

trip costs \$15,000, plus travel expenses) to the likes of Moscow, Switzerland and the Bahamas, where he learned to scuba dive to photograph a client’s deep-sea diving adventures. [kpkphoto.com](#)

**OVER-THE-TOP ORGANIZERS**

**Sharon Osbourne**, *Ghostbusters* director **Paul Feig** and **Bryce Dallas Howard** swear by **Justin Klosky** of O.C.D. Experience, whose team takes on everything from household moves to digital inventory management. One celebrity family called upon him to photograph and catalog every item in its three homes. “He has such an expansive

knowledge of technology and how to pair it with organization to simplify your life,” says Howard, who entrusted Klosky with a major move when she and actor husband **Seth Gabel** were on location (a large move can run upward of \$15,000). [ocdexperience.com](#)



The Jardin Escondido, Coppola’s property in Buenos Aires.

**DREAM-VACATION AGENTS**

Atherton, Calif.-based travel concierge **Gwen Books** of Gwen Books Lifestyle Management has been custom-tailoring holidays for her Silicon Valley-heavy client list since 2004. The most luxurious was a million-dollar vacation, which included two weeks on a superyacht. Says longtime client and

Netflix CEO **Reed Hastings** of a recent excursion: “We arrived by boat at the Four Seasons Hotel Istanbul at the Bosphorus from the airport in Istanbul. Splendid traffic-beating ride.” Adds Books: “We never say no.” [gwenbooks.com](#)

Another make-it-happen travel concierge: **Melissa Schwartz** of Destination Happiness. Her clientele includes **Mindy Kaling** and **Kerry Washington**, for whom she booked a last-minute premium reservation in New York City. “It was the 40th anniversary of *Saturday Night Live* and Valentine’s Day weekend. The city was full. I got Kerry a presidential suite because of my relationships.” The hotel had to place last-minute guests **Beyonce** and **Jay Z** in another suite (the presidential was their

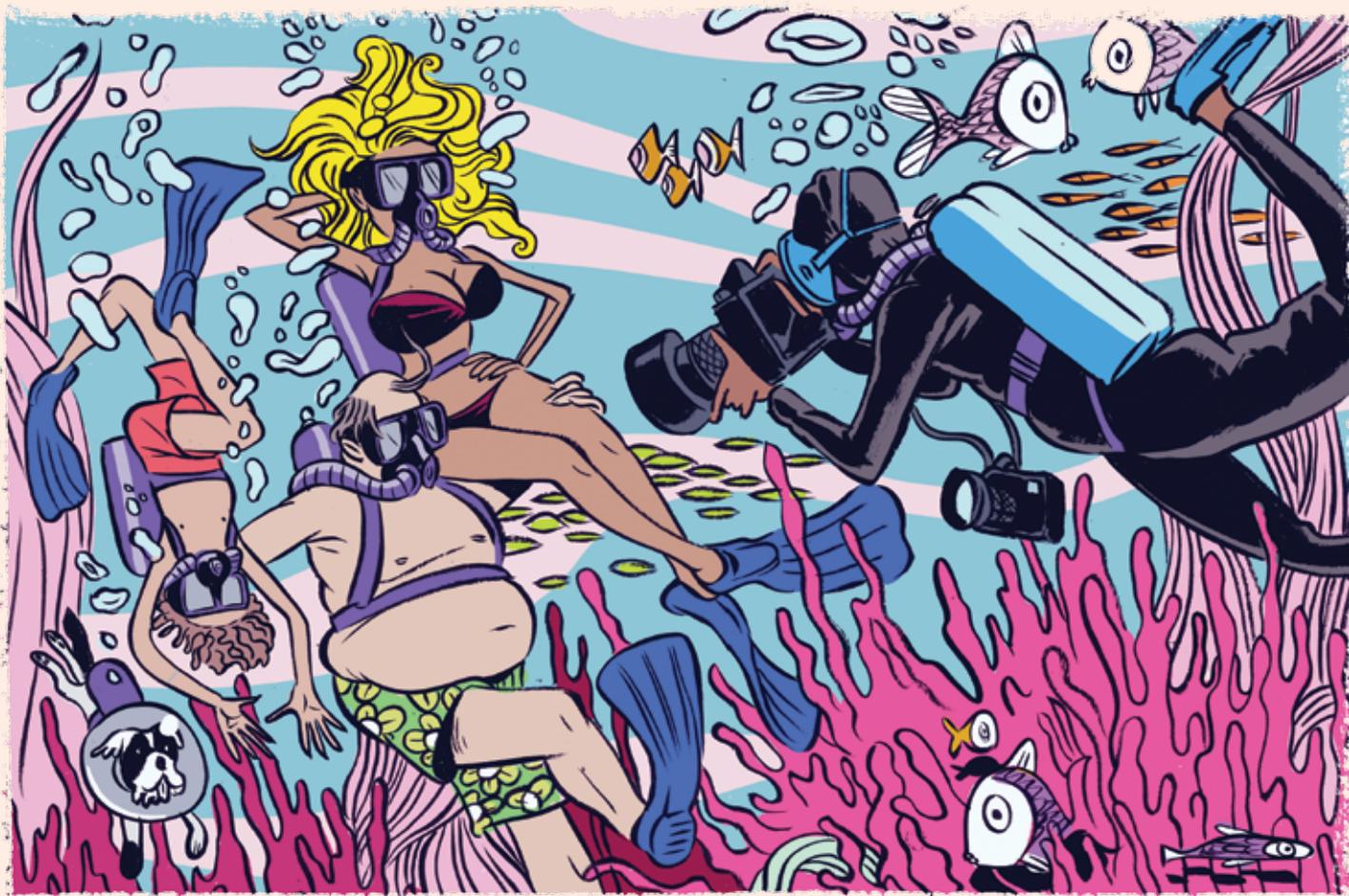
long-standing preference) and walk **Mick Jagger** to the Carlyle. Says Schwartz: “I live for challenges.” Contact: [melissa@yourdestinationhappiness.com](#)

**A CELEBRITY AIRBNB**

Oasis Collections, which made its L.A. debut in August, lets clients book a stay at one of its handpicked homes around the world (the company represents **Francis Ford Coppola**’s property in Buenos Aires), paired with on-location, 24/7 local concierge services and access to local private clubs and golf courses (for up to \$1,000 a night). Think Airbnb with the amenities of a luxury hotel. Adds CEO **Parker Stanberry**: “Oasis staff has arranged helicopter rides in Sao Paulo and Rio to avoid traffic and private jets to Punta del Este.” [oasiscollections.com](#)



Coppola



**A GENIUS FOR GIFTS**

If it's more than a bottle of wine you're looking for, **Simone LeBlanc's** namesake company hunts down the rare and refined, from lost family heirlooms to woolly mammoth tusks from the Black Sea. "My job is to stand behind my client and let them shine," says LeBlanc, who handpicks offerings that have been received by **Amy Poehler, Samuel L. Jackson, Harvey Weinstein, Robert Downey Jr. and David Geffen.** [simoneleblanc.com](http://simoneleblanc.com)

**IVY LEAGUE FIXERS**

College-bound students get the ultimate guidance counselors in IvyWise, a bespoke education consulting company geared toward admissions (fees start at \$1,000 and can range well into the six-figures for counseling and tutoring services throughout high school). In 2015, 92 percent of IvyWise students gained admission to one of their top three schools. "We can read a student's application and spot the red flags immediately," says Dr. **Kat Cohen**, who founded IvyWise in New York City 17 years ago. (Ten percent of their clients are L.A.-based; they can request in-person, video or online portal tutoring.) "The team has worked at some

of the most prestigious schools, which means we know what each school is looking for, down to the words, themes and attitudes to express in a personal essay statement to get into one Ivy League school versus another," she adds. "[Kat] developed a winning strategy," says entertainment attorney **Matt Johnson** of Ziffren Brittenham. "Our daughter was thrilled to be accepted to her first-choice school, Duke University." [ivywise.com](http://ivywise.com)

**YOUR OWN PRIVATE SOMMELIER**

Whether in the market for a customized wine cellar or a last-minute handpicked wine list for a dinner party, writer-producer **Scott Silveri** (*Friends*), Gathr Films founder and CEO **Scott Glosserman** and a handful of tight-lipped heads of motion-picture studios all rely on The Cellar Manager's **Matthew Goldfarb**. A certified sommelier and former private chef, Goldfarb has spent the last nine years catering to his A-list clients' every wine-related whim. "I received a phone call at 1 p.m. indicating that my client's private jet would be landing within the hour. On board were

30 cases of some of the most sought-after wines in the world from one of their homes," he says. "A temperature-controlled vehicle delivered them to their Bel Air cellar on the same day. We were done before the table was set and the dinner guests arrived." [thecellarmanager.com](http://thecellarmanager.com)

**ON-CALL PLASTIC SURGEON**

Traveling with a hairstylist and makeup artist may no longer be an extravagance, but flying one's own personal plastic surgeon is. For a starting fee of \$50,000 for a half day, Dr. **Gabriel Chiu** of Beverly Hills Plastic Surgery Inc. will fly his team and equipment anywhere for customized treatments, including injectables and nonsurgical augmentations of the face and body. "About 50 percent of private fly-to patients are on a highly personalized anti-aging regime," says Chiu. "The clientele that requests the most services are from the entertainment industry. Usually, it's due to ridiculously tough schedules, remote shooting locations or avoidance of the public eye. Most, if not all, have extreme expectations and no budget." [bhpsinc.com](http://bhpsinc.com)



Downey



Howard



Hastings

**LUXURY DRIVES ON DEMAND**

A car enthusiast and former commercial banker, **Joe Finci** founded his car brokerage in 2002 and has since become a go-to for industry players who want a new BMW but don't want to deal with a dealer. Finci arranges for a test drive, negotiates a good price, handles the paperwork and has the car delivered to your driveway. Finci's clientele — 60 percent of whom work in the industry, including agents at CAA, WME, Paradigm and UTA and executives at Sony, Universal, Fox, Paramount and CBS — favor expensive, profitable cars. This helps dealers increase their allocation of hard-to-get models, such as Porsche's red-hot Macan SUV (Finci has two on order). He's seen his share of business-manager interventions, including one with an actor who wanted to terminate his Land Rover lease to buy a new Mercedes S-550 plug-in hybrid. Laughs Finci: "Even if it's a drop in the bucket for them, it's still great to have a new car." 818-623-8148

**A RED-CARPET READING ATELIER**

Stylist services are taken to a

new level at The Albright Fashion Library, New York City's most extensive fashion archive with 20,000 pieces and counting, including every Saint Laurent, Tom Ford and Balmain piece from the last five years. The Library recently opened its by-appointment Beverly Hills atelier, run by mother-and-daughter team **Irene and Marina Albright**. It's \$250 to walk into this megacloset, beloved by top costume designers like **Patricia Field** and *Empire* season two's **Paolo Nieddu** as well as Hollywood stylists such as **Karla Welch** (*Elisabeth Moss*). The final look typically runs \$1,000 and up for garment and accessory rentals and styling. Whatever red-carpet looks they don't have, the Albrights and creative director **Patricia Black** will find. All pieces can be tailored to each client and shipped overnight anywhere in the world. Says Irene: "We handle every woman's personal event — her wedding, her son's bar mitzvah or a red carpet." [albrightrnyc.com](http://albrightrnyc.com)

**YOUR PERFECT DOG, DELIVERED**

A self-described canine well-being expert, Hollywood Pet Mom's **Lexi Beermann** is on speed dial throughout Hollywood for a handful of

high-profile dog owners who turn to her for all of Rover's training needs. These services include her round-the-clock Puppy Nurse program (one month starts at \$8,000; six months, \$36,000), in which Beermann lives with the dog either in the client's guesthouse or at her home to deliver a perfectly behaved pet. She says one client asked her to train his dog to sit on a chair at the table during family dinner and eat off a plate: "I did manage to teach her to stay until the last plate was cleared." Other services include a boot camp for behavioral emergencies (starting at \$3,700 for five days), for which an owner once flew her pup on a private jet to Beermann from Chicago. [hollywoodpetmom.com](http://hollywoodpetmom.com)

Holistic concierge vet Dr. **Patrick Mahaney** has been making house calls (starting at \$525) and offering VIP in-house pet-sitting since 2008. Mahaney once secured and personally delivered an international health certificate to a Miami billionaire couple in less than 24 hours so that their lapdog could board a flight bound for their \$300 million yacht in Turks and Caicos. "He's always available to consult and is knowledgeable about everything they need to stay healthy and happy," says **Jane Lynch**, whose two dogs have been under Mahaney's care since 2011. [patrickmahaney.com](http://patrickmahaney.com)

**THE ALL-AROUND CONCIERGES**

For **Jordan Contratto** and **Brandon Perkins**, transitioning from being Four Seasons Beverly Wilshire concierges for 17 years collectively to their own firm, B Panache, in June 2014 was a cinch. "We specialize in last-minute requests, where tensions are high and situations are changing," says Contratto, whose services include the "hotel-in-a-home" concept: sourcing a house for clients, installing furniture to their taste, staffing it and operating it like a luxury boutique hotel. The house concept can apply to glamping at Burning Man or Yacht Week in Croatia. "Even for a small family, it would be difficult to do this for less than \$250,000 a month," he adds. Services also extend to tailored itineraries, both globally and locally in L.A. Says Contratto, "If you're in L.A. or coming here and you want to live like a king — or you are one — call us." [bpanache.com](http://bpanache.com)