

Interview with a Travel Writer: Dave Thompson

There's no better way of finding out about a destination before you go than by talking to someone who has already been there. Following that philosophy, we have been doing the leg work for you and have got in touch with some of our favourite online travel writers to ask them about their experiences and the places they have visited.

For our first interview we caught up with Dave Thompson. A California native, wine lover and travel writer, Dave is the founder of [Dave's Travel Corner](#), a website where he documents his travels around the world and the trips he makes to vineyards and winemakers of the Napa Valley, California. We talked to Dave about why he thinks California is such a great place to visit – it's definitely a favourite for many of you – some of the vineyards he's been to and his favourite stories from travels further a field.

If you had 30 seconds to tell someone your life story, what would you say?

I love to travel internationally and write about it. I founded Dave's Travel Corner while I was in college. I also enjoy the outdoors, photography, backpacking, mountain climbing, meeting people, the Internet and experiencing other cultures. In 2006 I naively decided I would try to visit and write reviews about every winery in the Napa Valley, [California](#). Nearly seven years later I have visited and reviewed over 700 wineries and producers. I also wrote a book a few years ago – with a unique subject matter, called "The Freeways of Los Angeles".



Dave Thompson in the Maldives

What did you do before you became a travel writer? And what made you make the change?

I worked for many years for a small Internet Service provider that some friends started back in the mid 1990's. However it was never a 9 to 5 job - I've never had a job like that. I started travel writing in college - it has been a part of my life for a long time. - I have never had a "real job" so I've never had to make the "change" but rather have turned travel writing and other writing into a lifestyle.

You have visited more places in the world than most people, where would you say was the most incredible place you have been to and why?

Like my "favourite" wines, my answer to this question tends to change depending on the day you ask! One of my most favorite places in the world is to be perched on the side of a tall mountain - trying to summit the peak with friends. So I would have to say anywhere that is truly beautiful and involves spectacular mountains ranging from the Canadian Rockies, the European Alps to the Andes to the greatest mountain range in the world, the Himalayas. Incredible places to me involve a combination of the natural world and the human world. Two places that stick out in this regards are Petra in Jordan and Machu Picchu in Peru.

You say that "*Ownership of most things is overrated. Ownership of worldly experiences is not*" is one of your favourite travel quotes, can you tell us why?

Experiences are what stick with me throughout my life. I can look back and draw from experiences - whereas most things are just that - things. They come and go. A number of years ago I took stock of a bunch of "things" that had been collecting over the years. I decided to give away anything that I had not used in the last year. That was a rather large collection of items that I gave away. It was a choice that felt quite "freeing".

During your travels you must have found yourself in some fairly unexpected situations, do any stick in your mind as the funniest?

This funny incident happened earlier this month: My much older friend and I had arrived at the airport in Copenhagen (CPH). He decided to use the restroom and I followed him blindly. Unfortunately he walked straight into the women's restroom. I caught myself and saw the sign at the last minute; we were both very tired from jet lag and in this hazy state both the men's and women's restroom signs looked the same!

I then waited – and waited some more. I looked around to see if anyone had noticed. I waited about 30 seconds and he finally comes walking out of the restroom, head down looking quite sheepish. We both had a good laugh and continued onward looking for the appropriate bathroom for the appropriate sex. Later he indicated he almost told a few ladies inside the restroom they were in the wrong bathroom – then he thought more about that and decided this was a co-ed bathroom – before finally realizing he was the only male in this particular bathroom!



With a fellow

travel writer in Sweden

Most people have a list of places in the world they would like to see, what's at the top of your list?

Places I have not yet seen that are at the top of the list – are some of the “stans” (Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan etc), Antarctica and more exploration of tropical island destinations – namely the South Pacific.

California – where you call 'home' when you're not calling the rest of the world 'home' – is a favourite of our travellers, what do you think draws people to California?

A big part of the reason [California](#) is so popular is there is so much to experience here! We have a diversity of cultures that call this great state “home” – including many of the largest populations outside of their home countries. Not only that, but also the diversity in geography and the natural world. We have the ocean, deserts, mountains and beautiful forests. We have the tallest trees in the world, the largest and the oldest. Film has

certainly played a role in the promotion of the state. In general, our good weather is highly attractive. We have world class wines, are home to the headquarters for a number of prominent high-tech companies, aerospace and film. We have the largest ports on the West Coast of the United States.

California has many things to offer for both urban and nature lovers.

And if you had one thing you would say is *unmissable* in California what would it be?

It would be to take two weeks to slowly drive the eastern part of the state, over Tioga Pass in Yosemite (the highest highway pass in the state) and then down 395 from around Mono Lake exploring the small towns in the Owens Valley – the jagged scenic eastern part of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the oldest trees in the world (the Bristlecone Pines) – ultimately reaching Death Valley – one of the more unique and stark looking locations in the world – not to mention home to some of the world’s hottest daytime temperatures. California has incredible natural beauty and most tourists from abroad never experience this particular part of the state.

What two pieces of advice would you give our intrepid travel fans for getting the very most out of their travel experience?

Explore – get out of your comfort zone and try new foods, experiences and meet new people. Your life will be richer for this.

Be open to unpredictability. Most types of travel (especially Independent travel) are unpredictable. But this is what makes travel interesting!

Finally, where are you off to next?

For the first time in almost a year of nearly non-stop travel – I am without any definite travel plans! A couple of sponsored trips by their country’s respective tourism boards that I don’t yet have specific dates for but are scheduled for sometime this year – are to Costa Rica and the island of Nevis in the Caribbean. Maybe I’m ready to take a short break or maybe its just the jet lag speaking as I type this as I plan to take a bit of a break from the International travel and enjoy a fine California summer 😊

I am a bit of a heat lover and sometime in July I will give a 48 hour notice to my friends to join me for a no air conditioning camping trip in Death Valley (with a similar window of notice for what is done in regards to the International Mavericks Surfing competition). There

are a few weeks in July that historically are the hottest times of the year to visit. It is easily conceivable the official park thermometer (in the shade) will peak at temperatures of between 52 and 54 degrees!

If you would like to find out more about Dave his website, [Dave's Travel Corner](#), is a great place to start. You can also find him on [Twitter](#).

Follow [@titantraveluk](#)

Follow

Follow "Titan"

Get every new post delivered to your Inbox.

Join 3,792 other followers

Sign me up

Powered by [WordPress.com](#)