

VIP Survey: Malaak Compton-Rock



Malaak Compton-Rock (photo: Deborah Feingold)

What's your favorite hotel?

My new favorite hotel is called the [Tintswalo at Waterfall](#). It's a little boutique hotel in Johannesburg, but it's on a horse farm, so you don't feel like you're in the hustle and bustle of the city. Each room is different, themed after a different type of horse.

What's your favorite restaurant?

I love [Moyo](#) in Cape Town, South Africa. It's all outside, on a winery— they have tables set in trees and tables with swings. There are walking musicians, acrobats,

dancers and traditional South African face-painters. The food is absolutely delicious; an evening there is a magical experience.

I also love [The Ivy](#) in Los Angeles, and [Nobu 57](#) in New York.

Can you tell us about a "hidden gem"—like a non-touristy, neighborhood restaurant?

My favorite neighborhood restaurant happens to be a simple diner with the freshest food—Mike's Coffee Shop in Clinton Hill, Brooklyn. Best greasy diner food you're ever going to get.

Tell us about your worst travel experience.

I had to go to L.A. last minute—I made reservations around 10 p.m. for a flight the next morning. I'm pretty sure it was on American Airlines. I was traveling with my kids and my babysitter, and in order for us to go, we had to take the only seats left—two in first class and two in coach. It was the first time I'd been on a cross-country flight since airlines stopped meal service, and I was worried my babysitter and my child in coach were not going to get any food. When I asked the flight attendant about it, she just looked at me and said, "I don't really care. I'm just glad I have a job. They have to cut costs so we can keep our jobs." I was like, I can't believe you just said that to me. Then she said, "You know what? Next time take a train." She was the head flight attendant, too! Two other flight attendants actually came up to me and apologized to me about it—they were completely embarrassed by her behavior.

If a traveler had only one day to spend in your hometown, what are the top five things they should see or do?

My hometown is Oakland, CA. I'd recommend they have a spa day at the [Claremont Hotel](#). And I'd tell them to eat at the [Gingerbread House](#)—an upscale soul food restaurant that's shaped like a gingerbread house. They should take their kids to [Fairyland](#), a small, fairy-themed amusement park right on Lake Merritt. My mom went there as a child, I went there as a child, and I've taken my kids there! Then they should drive around [Lake Merritt](#), which is probably the most beautiful part of Oakland. Finally, they should shop at [Jack London Square](#).

If you could go anywhere in the world on your next vacation, where would you go and why?

Botswana—because I absolutely love the #1 *Ladies' Detective Agency* books. They take place in Gaborone, the capital. And I am dying to go on safari in the [Okavango Delta](#).

Malaak Compton-Rock founded Journey for Change: Empowering Youth Through Global Service, a program that takes at-risk Brooklyn youth on a two-week service trip to Johannesburg. With her husband, comedian Chris Rock, she runs The Angelrock Project South Africa, a trust providing assistance to children and people living with HIV/AIDS. Her book, [If It Takes a Village, Build One](#), will be in bookstores April 6.