

Behind the Keys



THE HISTORY, INSPIRATION, AND PEOPLE BEHIND OUR HIDDEN GEMS



LIFE BEYOND *the* ROOM
Sensorial Travel Experiences

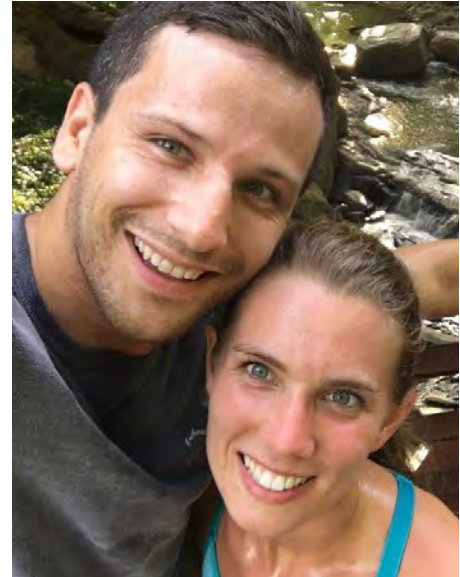


Life Beyond the Room is a company built on passion: passion for travel, passion for authenticity, culture, and experience, and also the passion of true love.

Jett and Karen were a married couple when they began LBR, but their story starts long before then. In fact, their paths would cross multiple times before they even learned one another's names!

Once Upon a Time

Jett was 17 when he spent his first summer in Puglia, and he likely would have remained there if his family had not insisted he return to the United States to finish his education. Karen, at around the same age, was part of a cultural exchange program that brought her from her home in Italy to spend a semester in Woodstock, Georgia, not too far from Jett's home. Their paths nearly crossed once again when the two attended the same university - Kennesaw State University.



After college, Karen stayed in Georgia on a work visa, teaching Italian. While at the local gym, she met Vanessa, Jett's sister and roommate. The two became friends, and Vanessa was eager to introduce Karen to her brother. Karen and



Jett's paths had finally, truly crossed, but it was hardly love at first sight. Then, one week in April, Karen and Vanessa and their friend group headed to the mountains to vacation at a cabin. Jett spontaneously decided to join for a day trip. It seemed like the universe had finally succeeded at throwing Jett and Karen together, and the spark was lit. The rest, as they say, is history.

When it came time for Karen to return home to Italy, the two married and settled in Georgia. Karen continued to teach and began to plan travel for her language students, using her deep, local knowledge of Italy to connect them with unique travel opportunities and experiences. Jett, equally passionate about travel, encouraged and helped.



Down to Business

Passionate about preserving local traditions, the two began growing their connections to help Italian locals profit from the travelers she sent, ensuring a longer legacy for these unique artisans and businesses. Each time Karen and Jett visited Italy they would spend time researching, vetting, and connecting with more local properties, artisans, experiences, and the like until on one trip a travel advisor recommended they look into becoming a DMC. By simply following their own method of travel, Karen and Jett had unknowingly become part of the slow travel trend. Incorporating this philosophy into a DMC business was a natural and logical step.

The two modeled the company on their deeply rooted personal convictions about travel, focusing on off the beaten path, authentic experiences; boutique, family-owned properties; honoring and upholding traditions; and preserving history and culture through respect and sustainable practices.

While on a trip to Ischia with her mother, Karen visited the Aragonese Castle. She was struck by the juxtaposition of the castle's centuries' old history with the awe-inspiring views and azure waters. It was easy to imagine basking in the sumptuous luxury the room had once held, with the promise of adventure and experience starting just past the windowsill. Her mother took a picture out of a window, perfectly encapsulating this apposition. This picture would become the inspiration for the company's name, and can still be seen in the logo for Life Beyond the Room.

The Future is Now!

In 2023, Karen and Jett decided to move their family and business to Italy permanently. Now it was Jett who would have to go through naturalization! The family settled on the outskirts of Rome in a property surrounded by olive trees, from which the children enjoy harvesting olives each November to press their own oil.

Life Beyond the Room has continued to grow and branch out since its inception, but the roots remain firmly planted in slow travel and will continue to remain here long after the industry has moved on to other trends. Life Beyond the Room will maintain their immersive, authentic, experiential travel focus and will continue to nurture its relationships with the locals and travelers alike.

The future is bright, but as if encapsulating slow travel even deeper into their philosophy, LBR has no plans to expand beyond Italy. However, there are many other exciting plans in the works, including unique collaborations with like-minded DMCs.

