

Grammy nominee shaped by travel

By Jae-Ha Kim
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Grammy-nominated saxophonist Dave Koz continues to combine his love of performing and traveling with his annual Somma cruise. This autumn's seven-day trip will take music fans through Greece, Italy, Montenegro and Croatia, and will include his own sets, as well from other artists like David Benoit and Jonathan Butler.

"Our Somma cruise is happening (in November, where we'll visit) some of the most beautiful ports of call in the Adriatic Sea," said Koz.

Koz splits his time between Los Angeles and Sausalito.

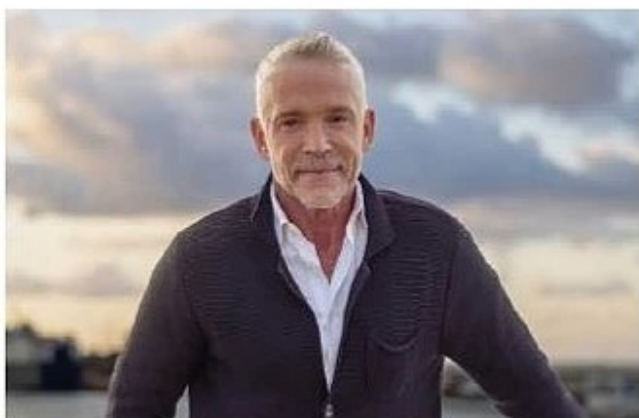
This interview with Koz has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: How important is it for people to travel?

A: Travel is really important to me. It's shaped me as a human being in ways that I can't even comprehend. We're about ready to tour Asia — China, Japan, Indonesia — and for me it's always really cool to absorb the culture that we're in and bring that experience onto the stage at night. The cruises offer us ... a really special chance to travel the world and see cities that I wouldn't normally see and get out there with our guests.

Q: What other trips do you have planned?

A: I've got a sabbatical this summer in Puglia in a region of Italy that I'm very excited about.



Grammy-nominated saxophonist Dave Koz longs to perform his complete show at Carnegie Hall. **COLIN PECK**

Q: What is your bucket list venue that you've yet to perform in?

A: I can't say that I never performed in (Carnegie Hall), but I only played eight bars of one song in a multi-artist event, and it was probably 30 years ago. I remember my mom flew to New York City from Los Angeles just to hear me play eight bars of a song and that always stuck with me. But to actually do my show at Carnegie Hall would be a dream come true.

Q: Have you visited places for work that were so nice that you traveled back?

A: Yes, absolutely. I remember going to Cape Town for the very first time to play. Somehow my music is super popular there, and I just fell in love with the city. I went back immediately as a tourist maybe about six months later.

Q: What untapped destinations should people know?

A: There's one city on our Somma cruise: Dubrovnik, Croatia. That was the backdrop for a lot of the vistas you saw on "Game of Thrones." I think it's an unsung hero of the region in Europe. It's so beautiful and there's so much to uncover there, but it's kind of off the beaten path.

Q: What's the most important thing you've learned from your travels?

A: I probably have learned most about myself. I think travel is the best way to hold a mirror up to yourself because you get out of your comfort zone. You realize that the way my culture

does things is not the only way to do it, and it expands you as a person.

Q: What are your five favorite cities?

A: If we're talking about the United States, I'd say New York City, Chicago, New Orleans, Miami. If you're in a party mood, I'm gonna say Boulder.

Q: Where would you like to go that you've never been to before?

A: South America is an undiscovered part of the world for me that I want to get to know much better.

Q: What is your guilty pleasure on the road?

A: I'm a coffee hound. I love finding a great coffee shop. You can really tell the personality of a city by their coffee shops.

Q: What is your best and worst vacation memory?

A: My worst ironically was the first cruise that I ever went on with my brother, sister and parents. It was a Mexican cruise and it was just not my cup of tea. So I think it's very ironic that I've become a cruiser and developed these cruise experiences for our guests. The best vacation memory was interestingly going with my whole family to the Middle East. We had a family vacation a number of years ago and all went to Israel and a couple of the neighboring countries. That was a very special experience to share with my family.

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