



UNDERCOVER TOUR PRO WHEN IT MAKES SENSE TO JOIN THE **JET SET**

When I fly commercial, I wear jeans and a hoodie. I won't shave, either, so when you first see me on the plane you might wonder, Who is this homeless person sitting in first-class?

The only airport where I'm recognised with any frequency is my home regional, but there it's nice.

People wave and say "Play well this week" if it's Tuesday morning, or "Welcome back" if it's a Monday or Saturday.

Nobody's going to corner me and ask if I think Tiger is really done.

I've got a handful of wins on the US PGA Tour, which makes for a good situation: I'm not a household name, and only lifelong golf fans know me.

I don't like being a jerk, but I can understand how a lot of top pros eventually become unapproachable.

They can't walk 50 feet without getting stopped. Everyone needs time for work, for family and just for themselves.

Because I spend so much time away from home, even 30 extra minutes here and there can feel precious. That's why I fly privately as much as I can.

Sure, four grand or so per hour can seem absurd, but the difference between sleeping in my bed at home on

Sunday night after a tournament versus hunkering down on a red-eye is priceless.

Flying privately all season, say 105 hours in the air, is going to cost half a mil.

For a top-30 guy, which means you're pulling down at least US\$6 million a year between prize money and endorsements, it's a no-brainer.

Players in the tier below need to be a bit more judicious.

FLYING PRIVATELY ALL SEASON IS GOING TO COST HALF A MILLION.

If I can text around and find two, or, better, three other golfers to split a jet, the cost to most destinations becomes about the same as a first-class ticket.

Obviously, coordinating everyone's schedule can get complicated, but

the Tour has travel staff to help out.

If you miss the cut on Friday morning and want to hop on a flight that afternoon to West Palm Beach, you won't have a problem.

Tons of pros live there.

If you need to go to Phoenix or Dallas, fly commercial.

There are so many direct flights that you'll get there in the same amount of time.

So what if you can't have your favourite vintage of chilled white wine? Play better.

When I take my family, that's a crew of kids, my wife and usually my mother-in-law.

The psychological toll of moving our circus through a crowded security line is no way to prepare for a tournament.

And because I'd have to buy six tickets, it basically justifies the cost of going private.

We just drive up to the tarmac, our bags are loaded right away, and boom, we're off.

A goofy aspect of the tax law is,

with fractional ownership of a jet, I can't write off the expense of taking my family.

But if I owned the jet outright (which only the real megastars do, like Rory, Tiger, Phil, Ernie), I could write off the whole thing.

Speaking of Uncle Sam, I've had issues. One of my early guys cut corners, and he had to pay the penalties later on. It dragged out and was a nightmare.

Now I have someone very conservative organise my tax return.

I'm not good enough to play out here with those kinds of distractions. And that's why I fly private, to cut down on distractions.

Getting in the right frame of mind to compete against the best in the world is hard enough without having to deal with delays, lost bags, grubby foodcourts, other people's screaming children.

Or the stranger seated next to me who asks why I missed that three-footer on TV.

— with Max Adler