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BEST — OF THE — WORLD

OUR GLOBAL EDITORS PICK 35 INCREDIBLE
DESTINATIONS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

AUSTRALIA • BELIZE • CANADA • EGYPT • ITALY • JAPAN • PERU • & MORE



PLUS: BERLIN // DEVON // ESTONIA // THE GAMBIA // MEXICO // NAPLES // PHUKET // QUEBEC CITY

Made to measure

Bespoke travel has become even more prized among travellers of means in the wake of the pandemic. Private, customisable travel with an emphasis on experience over ostentation is a worthwhile investment. Words: Samantha Lewis

Luxury is changing. For many affluent travellers, five-star indulgence just isn't enough anymore as traditional ideas of top-end travel are being redefined. Opulent hotels and first-class travel are becoming less of a priority than experiences that are distinct and highly personalised.

This shift has meant bespoke travel companies have never been in greater demand — specialists in creating one-of-a-kind dream trips catering to the traveller's every want and wish: transport, accommodation, excursions and pace of trip. Bookings aren't made by travel agents but are curated by travel designers. These skilled individuals utilise their first-hand knowledge of destinations to craft tailor-made itineraries with the utmost care and attention to detail.

Moreover, they'll use their connections to make the impossible possible and manage all the logistics. They'll know how to gain VIP

access to exclusive landmarks allowing you to skip the queues and bypass the crowds.

Take tour operator Cazenove and Loyd, for instance, which offers clients private access to explore Egypt's ancient pyramids alongside an Egyptologist. Another of its top picks is a trip to Peru, where travellers can experience treks most don't know about and enjoy Amazon expeditions with world-class naturalist guides.

Then there's Scott Dunn, which has launched a service so exclusive you have to apply to be a member. The platform is called Scott Dunn Private and is designed to meet the needs of travellers with deep pockets. Clients are assigned an adviser who travels extensively and is privy to details such as whether a hotel's presidential suite is worth the splurge. Scott Dunn Private also has an exclusive selection of properties on its books, from a chateau overlooking France's Loire Valley to a former monastery in Croatia.



SIMON LYNCH
GLOBAL SALES AND
PRODUCT DIRECTOR
AT SCOTT DUNN

WHAT DESTINATIONS AND TRIPS HAVE BEEN POPULAR THIS YEAR AND WHY?

As travel has been restricted, the destinations that have been most popular have been the places that opened back up first, so demand was very much in line with the traffic light green destinations. For UK travellers over the summer months, Portugal was one of the first ports of call, as it was one of the first destinations to turn green.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MAIN DRAW OF BESPOKE TRAVEL AT THIS TIME?

Travel has become hugely individual as everyone emerges from the pandemic at their own pace. Making up for lost time is a key theme right now and that means different things to different people. It's all about creating a customised trip to perfectly match individual needs and ensuring the experience creates long-lasting memories.

CAN YOU PROVIDE AN EXAMPLE OF ONE OF YOUR MOST OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD TRIPS?

We offer an incredible itinerary combining South Africa and Antarctica — allowing guests to see a colony of emperor penguins and the Big Five all in one holiday. From £100,000 based on a couple travelling, including international flights, internal flights and private transfers and daily experiences. scottdunn.com



IMAGE GETTY

BESPOKE TRAVEL



SASHA KING MANAGING DIRECTOR OF HIGH POINT YACHTING

WHAT MAKES BESPOKE YACHT CHARTER TRAVEL SPECIAL?

It's independent and self-sufficient travel with no compromise on service and luxury. It also provides a privacy that's hard to replicate elsewhere.

WHAT TRIPS HAVE BEEN POPULAR?

By far the most popular type of charter has been the crewed yacht charter. Catamarans, gulets and motor yachts are most in-demand. The beauty of this type of charter is the freedom it gives you — the yachts can stick to well-known routes or leave the beaten path as much as the client wants. Routes are tailored to create the sort of experiences that stir the heart.

HAVE YOU NOTICED CLIENTS BECOMING MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS OF LATE?

Very much so. The consciousness is there. I still advise crews to make a point of mentioning any green initiatives they're following, however small they might be. The reaction is always positive. Some clients even want to get involved in clean-ups on beaches and the sea bottom that some of the crews organise. More and more clients want to know about the collection and disposal of rubbish. Having a water-maker on board is a great advantage and is very popular. (highpointyachting.com)



To create a healthier lifestyle, for example, it sends travellers to Copenhagen to learn the key for nailing work-life balance. You'll embed yourself in Danish culture, witnessing first-hand the nation's unique approach to separating personal and professional life.

In Iceland, those looking to broaden their business horizons will have a private guided tour of the Lava Centre — an innovative, high-tech facility set up in the aftermath of the 2010 volcanic eruption — and gather insight from senior managers at an ultra-luxe spa hotel on Iceland's Blue Lagoon.

And Peru is recommended for those on a quest to live more sustainably: travellers can meet with the country's most renowned potato farmer and get a taste of the ancient Peruvian way of cooking food underground.

High Point Yachting, which specialises in bespoke luxury yacht charter packages everywhere from the Mediterranean and

Caribbean to French Polynesia, is also helping travellers explore the world with purpose.

The company has noticed its clients are making a conscious effort to travel more sustainably and want to know about onboard green initiatives.

High Point Yachting's fleet is employing innovative solutions to ensure their environmental impact is kept to a minimum. The crew onboard the Croatian-based yacht *MALA*, for instance, create their own drinking water for guests and provide glass water bottles, paper straws and cotton shopping bags. Beyond this, they lead regular beach clean-ups in beautiful Croatian bays.

Luxury travel looks very different in a post-pandemic era but it's by no means any less rewarding. Ultimately, tailor-made trips give you the opportunity to decide what this new, richer sense of luxury means to you. Once you figure it out, don't waste a minute making up for missed adventures. ▣