



## The Future of Luxury Travel

### The Sustainability Imperative

#### Sustainability as a top priority for the luxury traveler

Luxury travelers' interest in sustainability is on the rise, and the effects are making ripples across the industry, with a major boost for destinations committed to protecting the environment, preserving local culture, and benefiting local economies—not to mention the industry as a whole. In a recent Virtuoso survey, 74% of luxury travelers said they are willing to pay more to travel responsibly, especially if it's clear how the money will be used. Relationships with luxury agents also had a significant influence, with respondents indicating that recommendations from trusted travel advisers would encourage them to travel more sustainably.

This second article on luxury travel trends I will zero in on what rising interest in sustainability means for the industry—and what travel and hospitality businesses can do to help attract this important market.

#### A booming market in luxury ecotourism

When it comes to sustainable travel, it may be no surprise that high-net-worth travelers want to have five-star accommodations, food, and transportation; unique, personalized experiences in “exotic” locales; and travel experiences that help preserve and benefit land, communities, and wildlife. This can be as simple as booking an ecofriendly or green hotel, or as intentional as volunteering with an immersive conservation project.

For luxury travel brands, opportunities to enter this market, and to combine sustainability and luxury, can take many forms. Some notable examples:

- **Accor**, which operates resort and vacation brands in 110 countries, is a member of the Sustainable Hospitality Alliance, a global sustainability network whose members make up 25% of the industry. The hotel group funds tree planting with money saved from reduced water and

energy use, furnishes its hotels with recycled and eco-friendly materials, and sources food from sustainable vendors or its own organic gardens.

- **Aman Resorts**, a Swiss-based operator of luxury properties in 20 countries, follows Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) industry criteria, including considering local heritage, culture, and economy; environmental protection; and social responsibility in each aspect of development and hotel operations.

- **Fogo Island Inn**, situated on an island off of Newfoundland, opened a decade ago to offer a luxury hospitality experience based in community-centered values. The ultra-premium inn is owned by the nonprofit Shorefast, which is dedicated to making it possible for local communities to thrive in the global economy, with a focus on securing Fogo Island's place-specific cultural and economic future. In accord with Shorefast's mission, 100% of the inn's operating surpluses are returned to the local community for reinvestment and development work

- **Habitas**, a group of nine resort properties in Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Mexico, Namibia, and the US, offers luxury travel experiences at sites grounded in sustainable development and operations, including its Leadershift conference, "featuring impactful global leaders looking to empower cultures, systems, new business models, and projects where all living beings can thrive." The company also chooses construction methods that minimize environmental impact, is committed to eliminating single-use plastics, purchases carbon offsets, and works with local organizations to recycle and compost waste.

- **Magdas Hotel** in Vienna bills itself as Austria's first Social Business Hotel, blending social enterprise and upcycled design to deliver a distinctive sustainable travel experience. The hotel trains and employs former refugees, recent immigrants, and other professionals of multiple nationalities; furnishes its rooms with upcycled midcentury furnishings; and powers its building with geothermal and solar energy. And, travelers who arrive by bike or public transport receive a 10% discount.

- **One&Only** operates award-winning luxury resorts and high-end private vacation rentals in 11 countries, each of which offers sustainability-conscious activities and experiences "from mountain gorilla encounters to exhilarating



water sports and Shamanic wellness treatments." Individual properties have their own sustainability focuses, including protecting sea turtles in the Maldives and employing former wildlife poachers in sustainable jobs.

#### Multiple benefits for luxury brands

While there are many ways for hospitality and travel brands to boost sustainability, those who typically do the best job of attracting increasingly eco-conscious luxury consumers will build sustainability into their development and operations, making a conscious effort to simultaneously deliver luxury while making a tangible positive difference for the local people, cultures, and environment. Deloitte boasts a strong track record in advising luxury travel providers, with extensive experience developing strategies, enhancing digital innovations, and collaborating with local suppliers. For practical ideas on how to make more sustainable choices, from attracting a diverse workforce to limiting water usage, managing electricity, and sourcing locally, read the article on sustainability in travel—then check out the third and final

installment on hyperpersonalization in the luxury travel market.

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