

# LUXURY TRAVEL

**Personalized Experiences.**

**Exceptional Service.**

**Wonderful Memories.**



**Explora**  
JOURNEYS



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**W**hat has changed and what remains the same when it comes to luxury vacations? In this *Luxury Travel Trends Report*, we take a closer look at how luxury travel has evolved due to the pandemic. We all know that luxury travelers are the ones who are the first to venture off to explore the world after a crisis, so the trends that resonate with them set the stage for what's to come. And as Steve Smotrys, v.p., global sales for **Seabourn**, says, "I have heard time and again that people want to travel in a way that feels like it did in years past but in a way that provides peace of mind."

For this *Luxury Travel Trends Report*—a complement to the *Luxury Travel Trends Survey* conducted on **recommend.com** as well as the *How to Make Money in Today's Landscape Selling Luxury Travel*—we reached out to experts in the luxury travel segment to gain insight into what will drive demand and what luxury travelers will be looking for into 2022 & beyond. This report

also contains the survey results, which provided some interesting data, including that travelers are still seeking top-notch customer service as well as top-tier amenities, and, as a result of the pandemic, room to roam and villa accommodations. And personalization? Well, that's been key in booking a successful luxury vacation in the past and it remains true in today's climate.





## Defining Luxury Travel in This New Landscape

“Being in the moment and having the chance to enjoy without limitation is the new luxury,” says Erica Doyne, sr. v.p., marketing and communications, **AMResorts**. “Over the last year,” she says, “luxury travel has been redefined. In this new landscape, luxury travel goes beyond the total number of F&B outlets and well-appointed guestrooms. Open spaces, ease of access and safety protocols are now at the forefront of travelers’ decision-making, while the opportunity to celebrate every moment is the driving force behind their desire to get away.”

Chris Austin, CSO for **Explora Journeys**, also says “space” is what ultra-luxury and luxury travelers are looking for in today’s current travel climate. “Space and the option for privacy. Today’s affluent travelers are seeking a purposeful and immersive hospitality experience that is designed around their needs. Space is of the highest importance and privacy too.”

Add peace of mind, which **St. Vincent & the Grenadines’** CEO Glen Beache says is how luxury is being defined right now. “It’s a matter of being taken away. With everything that’s going on in the world, it’s about getting away from everything. Not having to worry about anything for a while.”

Another key factor defining luxury is authentic, unique, personalized and once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Says Pilar Arizmendi-Stewart, v.p. of sales and marketing for the Americas at **Palladium Hotel Group**, “Luxury travel is about authentic experiences. Today’s travelers want to have

personalized experiences that cater to their travel styles and needs,” with Paul Pennicook, CEO for the **Curaçao Tourism Board**, noting that “luxury is focused on creating once-in-a-lifetime experiences and making those bucket list trips a reality. After the world was put on pause and many missed out on milestone celebrations, unforgettable moments, and the opportunity to make memories with their loved ones, luxury is now the ability to take all of that back and make it happen in real life—and in a bigger, more unforgettable way.”

Santiago C. Corrada, president and CEO of **Visit Tampa Bay**, also ►

“ In the current climate, luxury travel has boomed and helped lead travel recovery at a much higher rate compared to other segments of the hospitality industry. As a result of the pandemic, there is a pent-up demand for travel trending toward sophisticated vacations with certified safety programs.”  
– Erica Doyne, Senior Vice President, Marketing & Communications, AMResorts



“I now put together very detailed online itineraries that include each step a client needs to take including testing and forms with dates so that they don’t miss a requirement. I’ve created videos on my YouTube channel to walk clients through the process and show first-hand experience of travel during COVID. This has helped many feel comfortable with traveling again.” – *Lainey Melnick, Luxury Travel Professional, Dream Vacations-Lainey Melnick & Assoc*

It’s also about technology and the quick accessibility it provides, says Lee Ann Benavidez, v.p. of distribution partnerships and transient sales strategy for **MGM Resorts International**. “Luxury at your fingertips. This new landscape is about accessibility, via the latest technology, while also making sure that attention to detail and attentiveness to our clients remain at the forefront.”

And, where once opulence or excessive wealth defined luxury travel, today, says Brett Armitage, CCO for **Kerzner International**, the luxury set is “in search of the luxury of choice. They want to feel connected to the destination and the locale while enjoying a richness of experience.” ➤

“As vaccination rates continue to rise, more and more people are ‘revenge traveling’ and going on ‘vaxications’ (vacations after getting vaccinated against COVID-19) to make up for lost time.” – *Pilar Arizmendi-Stewart, Vice President of Sales and Marketing for the Americas, Palladium Hotel Group*

points to those once-in-a-lifetime experiences as the new luxury, something that “can’t be found elsewhere, and now, more than ever, they are desired in intimate settings.” Erick Garnica, sr. director, leisure travel industry sales for **Discover The Palm Beaches**, concurs, pointing out, too, that, “amongst the tangible product, luxury travel is about the genuine hospitality and personalized experiences that make guests feel at home and pampered.”





“ Guests are looking for destinations that offer bespoke experiences and allow for safe distances without compromising their stay.” – *Erick Garnica, Senior Director, Leisure Travel Industry Sales, Discover The Palm Beaches*

“ Advisors certainly are showing their value and need to know a great deal more about travel requirements to support their valued clients. Luxury vacations and experiences will be in huge demand in the future and choice and options continue to grow.” – *Chris Austin, Chief Sales Officer, Explora Journeys*

### Luxury Travelers’ Expectations

Protocols, protocols, protocols. Traveling today is VERY different than it was traveling two years ago. And the luxury traveler is no different.

They have to follow a country’s protocols while traveling around the globe. With that in mind, it’s no wonder, says Gabriel Ibarra Macias, sales & marketing director for **Mexico Grand Hotels**, that safety is priority number-one among luxury travelers. “Travelers look for destinations/hotels where they perceive safety and ease of PCR/Antigen testing,” he says, with “social distancing,” says Arizmendi-Stewart, still a top priority. And as travel advisor Lainey Melnick, **Dream Vacations-Lainey Melnick & Assoc**, says, luxury travelers “have the money for the bungalows, villas and suites for more distancing but still want service.” She notes, too, that “making testing and medical needs easy is also key. My clients love when the testing for return

to the U.S. is included at the resorts/cruises with onsite medical facilities.”

As Smotrysts notes, “With protocols and travel requirements frequently changing, luxury guests expect consistent communication. They are looking at us to have plans and protocols in place to allow them to travel and enjoy themselves safely without worrying about the details.” Adds Doyne, “As a result of the pandemic, there is a pent-up demand for travel trending toward sophisticated vacations with certified safety programs.”

Adding to the health and safety element are the customized experiences that luxury travelers have always expected but seem to have heightened in the current climate. As Benavidez notes, “We’re seeing more of our luxury guests requesting memorable, curated experiences from check-in to check-out. We’re also seeing clients book stays for multiple

family members with adjoining rooms for reunions, anniversary celebrations and birthdays.”

In fact, says Pennicook, “luxury upgrades, privacy and safety, personalization, once-in-a-lifetime experiences, culture, cuisine and the opportunity to reconnect with family/friends are top of mind.”

And of utmost importance to all travelers is travel insurance. Says travel advisor Diana M. Hechler, president, **D. Tours Travel**, “They are ALL interested in travel insurance, but I have to be very clear about what insurance will cover and what it will NOT cover at this point.” She adds, too, that many are asking if other people are traveling and “is it safe to plan a trip to London or Paris this Christmas?” ➤

“ The demand for luxury cruises, especially longer trips, is at an all-time high. In recent years, luxury guests have shifted mindset where experiences are now a higher priority. We expect this trend to continue as there is a greater appreciation for bucket list experiences.”  
– *Steve Smotrysts, Vice President, Global Sales, Seabourn*



“ I now collect a non-refundable deposit for all curated vacations. If someone is visiting Costa Rica or Italy for 10 days, in addition to whatever my DMC partner imposes as a cancellation and deposit policy, I add my own terms. As the pandemic got going in 2020 and trips were canceled, the refunds made did not compensate me for either my time and equally significant, the sometimes hefty credit card fees that I had absorbed. It was an expensive lesson for me.”  
– Diana M. Hechler, President, D. Tours Travel

## Road to Success

This is where a travel advisors' expertise comes in. You're the expert who can provide all of the information on protocols, safety at a given destination and whether in fact, it will be okay for your clients to head to Paris or London...or whatever their preferred destination might be...this holiday season.

Melnick says she now puts “together very detailed online itineraries (check them out here: <https://www.mytravelplannerapp.com/trip/6yw9rqusrk9wqz2ah76xsra5qrj96ma>) that include each step a client needs to take including testing and forms with dates so that they don't miss a requirement. I've created videos on my YouTube channel ([youtu.be/irrDpHTbgd0](https://youtu.be/irrDpHTbgd0) & [youtu.be/vt3TIWXslcM](https://youtu.be/vt3TIWXslcM)) to walk clients through the process and show first-hand experience of travel during COVID.” She also recommends the airport expedite service to make the airport experience “less stressful.”

Hechler points out that she now collects “a non-refundable deposit for all curated vacations. If someone is visiting Costa Rica or Italy for 10 days, in addition to whatever my DMC partner imposes as a cancellation and deposit policy, I add my own terms. As the pandemic got going in

2020 and trips were canceled, the refunds made did not compensate me for either my time, and equally significant, the sometimes hefty credit card fees that I had absorbed. It was an expensive lesson for me.”

As Armitage notes, “Travel advisors are the most in-demand resource for those looking to begin exploring the world anew.” In fact, says Bryan Gay, sr. v.p. of sales at **Atlantis Paradise Island**, “There has been a rise in the use of travel advisors since the pandemic as travelers want to feel an extra layer of security while booking their vacations. Advisors now need to focus not only on the product that they are selling but also on the privacy and safety of the location.”

Perhaps one of the silver linings of the pandemic is, as Hechler says, that her “expertise has acquired higher value in [travelers'] eyes.” In fact, says Doyne, “Now more than ever, consumers are willing to pay for value and an experience that allows them to escape with peace of mind. Advisors can serve as the expert consultants, staying one step ahead of their clients' expectations by offering expert knowledge of the ever-changing travel environment.” Garnica points out that “successful

travel advisors need to be able to adjust itineraries last-minute based on changing regulations and familiarize themselves with more off-the-beaten path destinations that they may have been less familiar with before the pandemic.”

Engagement—that's key to securing those luxury travelers, says Benavidez. “Customer engagement has become more important than ever. Travelers have spent the past 18 months in the dreaming, planning, researching phase for these trips and advisors have the responsibility to answer their questions about experiences, products and accommodations but also about how to travel. Advisors are trying to manage their expectations with matters that may differ from a client's previous stay.”

This need for expertise, says Austin, is not going away, as “luxury vacations and experiences will be in huge demand in the future and choice and options continue to grow,” with Smotrys adding that “As luxury guests want the very best experience available, luxury travel advisors become essential in helping guide their decisions.” ➤

“Honing in on warm hospitality, beautiful wide-open landscapes and experiences only found in the destination are key to successfully selling luxury travel.” – *Santiago C. Corrada, President and CEO, Visit Tampa Bay*

### Survey Says...

We wanted to hear from you—you gave us the 4-1-1 and here’s what the *Luxury Travel Trends Survey* says:

**Good news:** You and your peers are optimistic about early 2022 bookings, with almost half of survey respondents saying that **bookings are looking good for end of 2021 and into early 2022**. More than half of survey respondents are **catering to the 55+ age group** when booking luxury, and most of those clients are, according to the survey, opting to travel solo or with their partner.

So, which type of luxury bookings are you currently working on for travel into 2022? Our survey points to a **beach destination in Mexico or the Caribbean** as the most popular, with a **cruise—either ocean or river, domestic or international**—following close behind (good news for the cruise industry). In fact, one of the survey questions points to a neck-and-neck race among ocean and river when it comes to cruise bookings.

The essential must-haves while on a luxury vacation? According to the survey, luxury travelers are still expecting **top-notch customer service** and **top-tier amenities**, and the pandemic has propelled them to seek out places with ample **space to roam** as well as **villa accommodations**, allowing for social distancing and, very important, **customization**. Also important for your luxury clients? Access to cultural sights.

And the luxury clients of the travel advisors surveyed are hungry to get to **Europe**, with about 50 percent of those surveyed pointing to this region of the world as being the most asked about when it comes to future bookings.

Flexibility when it comes to rebooking and cancelation policies as well as health and safety protocols are still top of mind for survey respondents’ clients when it comes to planning their vacation, with the infection rate at the destination making only a blip in the survey results. And yes, as it has happened across all niches in travel, luxury travelers are buying **much more travel insurance**—according to 85 percent of those surveyed—and when it comes to booking windows, 66 percent of survey respondents say that there is now a **shorter booking window** for clients planning a luxury vacation than there was pre-pandemic.

### Book It...

Here are a few booking recommendations for luxury travelers as 2021 rolls into 2022:

🌀 **Explora Journeys’** fleet of four “innovative ships provide space, choice, privacy, relaxed comfort and elegance,” says Austin. The ships feature 461 oceanfront suites with sea views and a private terrace. The lead-in *Ocean Terrace Suite* offers guests 377 sq. ft. of indoor and outdoor space, or guests can indulge in an *Ocean Residence*, with expansive terraces with private whirlpools. The *Owner’s Residence* is 3,014 sq. ft. and spans the entire width of the ship. “Additionally, guests will be spoiled for choice with nine distinct culinary experiences, four pools, private cabanas, spa and redefined entertainment,” adds Austin.

🌀 **Seabourn** has announced that *Seabourn Encore* will resume service earlier than anticipated starting on Feb. 19, 2022, with a series of new 10- and 11-day itineraries to the Canary Islands and the Mediterranean roundtrip from Lisbon, Portugal, during the winter and spring of 2022. The ship is the third ship in Seabourn’s fleet to return to service.

🌀 **“AMR Collection,”** says Doyne, “is the right destination for today’s luxury travelers because each resort brand is designed for every lifestyle and stage of life to fit guests’ needs.” For those looking for some R&R with their partner or friend group, **Secrets** ➤

“Customer engagement has become more important than ever. Travelers have spent the past 18 months in the dreaming, planning, researching phase for these trips and advisors have the responsibility to answer their questions about experiences, products and accommodations but also about how to travel.”  
– *Lee Ann Benavidez, Vice President of Distribution Partnerships and Transient Sales Strategy, MGM Resorts International*





and **Breathless Resorts & Spas** cater to adults-only vacations, while **Dreams Resorts & Spas** was designed for families with activities for all ages. The **Zoëtry Wellness & Spas Resorts** is also a “favorite for sophisticated wellness and cultural immersion in a boutique, intimate setting.”

🌟 **The Cove at Atlantis Paradise Island** is nestled between two private beaches and offers 600 suites with balconies and floor-to-ceiling ocean views, white glove service, and an adults-only pool with 20 private beach cabanas. Meanwhile, **The Reef** offers guests a home-away-from-home feel with residential-style studios and suites with kitchenettes or full kitchens with ocean views. Guests staying at The Reef have access to a stand-alone, zero-entry Cascades pool and easy access to Paradise Beach.

🌟 **Curaçao** is home to 30 beaches, 60 dive sites, a “thriving culture and culinary scene,” says Pennicook, “as well as rich history and seasoned tour operators.” He adds that, “Curaçao offers accommodations to meet all kinds of demand, from luxury hotels and posh villas in remote areas to oceanview penthouse suites.”

🌟 **Mexican Grand Hotels** in Los Cabos is a family-owned Mexican company with the “philosophy,” says Macias, “of providing an authentic Mexican luxurious experience and personalized service to our guests in different ways throughout their journey.”

🌟 **“Bellagio,”** says Benavidez, “is iconic. It truly gives the luxury traveler an exceptional experience, from suite and villa accommodations to restaurants, shows, spa experiences and shopping. Over the past year, travelers have thought about their ‘bucket list’ of travel and life experiences, and Las Vegas is high on that list, specifically seeing the Fountains at Bellagio. Multiple restaurants at Bellagio offer Fountain views such as Spago, Lago and Mayfair Supper Club, which also offers live music and entertainment. Another iconic attraction at Bellagio is The Conservatory, which changes themes with different seasons.”

🌟 The newly opened **One&Only Mandarin** in the Riviera Nayarit is located in a private beach sanctuary that is, says Armitage, “unlike anything else in the surrounding area, built seamlessly within a beachfront setting and blending resort-chic living with tropical relaxation and authentic outdoor adventures.” Armitage points to the *One&Only Spa* with treatments from clean beauty expert Tata Harper complementing holistic wellness experiences inspired by the indigenous communities of the region.

🌟 **TRS Hotels**, says Arizmendi-Stewart, represent the “crème de la crème of **Palladium Hotel Group**. They are adult-exclusive hotels offering exclusive service philosophy. TRS Hotels guests have

access to *Infinite Indulgence*, which provides them with a personal butler and complimentary shuttle service within the adjacent **Grand Palladium Hotels & Resorts.**”

🌟 The **Palm Beaches** offers travelers a diverse collection of “best-in-class experiences including top golf courses, renowned arts and culture, world-class shopping, acclaimed outdoor recreation and eco-tourism, delectable cuisine from famed chefs, and an unrivaled social calendar,” says Garnica. “Guests can enjoy the best of Florida in our wide-open spaces with fewer crowds, while soaking in all of our unique and exceptional offerings. The luxury concept continually reinvents itself, and while we remain on the forefront of trends, we keep our standards high and stay true to our traditional roots of genuine hospitality.”

🌟 **“Tampa Bay** is brimming with luxury accommodations, experiences and culinary delights,” says Corrada. “Brand-new hotels like the **JW Marriott** and Tampa Bay’s first five-star property, the **Tampa EDITION** opening in 2022, provide upscale accommodations in the heart of downtown’s booming new Water Street development. Luxury experiences including high-end shopping at International Plaza, and a culinary-inspired spa retreat at the **Epicurean Hotel** round out Tampa Bay’s upscale offerings.”



# Explora

## JOURNEYS

### **How is Explora Journeys contributing to luxury travel?**

Luxury travel has witnessed a significant shift as a result of the pandemic and, as the industry starts to recover and revive with the opening of borders, the luxury travel sphere has witnessed beneficial outcomes and ways in which travel and cruise trends have been redefined.

Creating a luxury brand that will redefine the cruise experience and create a category of its own has been a long-held vision of Chairman, Pierfrancesco Vago, his wife Alexa Aponte Vago and the Aponte family.

Explora Journeys is a new luxury lifestyle brand and brings a new style of transformative ocean travel that inspires exploration in all its forms, delivered with a spirit of vibrant, cosmopolitan, and relaxed European luxury.

The cruise industry is very resilient, and consumers are eager to travel again however in a more immersive and purposeful way.

By creating its own luxury lifestyle category, Explora Journeys will change the perception of cruising, offering remarkable itineraries that blend renowned destinations with lesser-travelled ports for a journey that celebrates discovery.

Explora Journeys set themselves apart by five central elements – space, choice, design, destination experiences, and an unwavering commitment to the travel advisor community.

Based on comprehensive research and consumer intelligence, Explora Journeys understands their guests desire to travel slower and deeper with a sense of purpose.

The amplified desire for space, privacy, and choices are all reflected; one of highest guest to space ratios in the luxury category; choice is provided with nine culinary experiences and four swimming pools. The suites and residences are truly luxurious 'homes at sea' with exceptional service to deliver the ultimate feeling of an Ocean State of Mind.

### **About Explora Journeys**

Explora Journeys is redefining ocean travel for a new generation of discerning travellers. With the first of four luxury ships scheduled to set sail in 2023, remarkable itineraries will blend renowned destinations with lesser-travelled ports for a journey that celebrates discovery. With its ships equipped with the latest in environmental-supporting and marine technologies, Explora Journeys will introduce a unique all-inclusive luxury travel experience for those who want to explore differently.

Whether on board or ashore, guests will reconnect with what matters most—themselves, their loved ones, and the world around them. With 461 oceanfront suites, every guest will enjoy sweeping sea views and a private terrace, while being spoilt for choice with nine distinct culinary experiences, four pools, private cabanas, spa, and redefined entertainment.

### **Contact**

To learn more about Explora Journeys, visit [Explora Journeys.com](https://ExploraJourneys.com) or [waitlist@explorajourneys.com](mailto:waitlist@explorajourneys.com) or follow us on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.



# SEABOURN®

Seabourn pioneered small-ship ultra-luxury cruising. Our all-inclusive, boutique ships provide unforgettable journeys in all-suite ocean-view accommodations enhanced by innovations such as open-seating dining; inclusive cocktails, wine, and spirits; and a no-tipping policy.

Seabourn's staff is specially recruited and trained to practice an intuitive, highly personalized style of hospitality focused on individual guest recognition. This attention to detail and guest comfort has evolved into a signature attribute of the brand, attracting a loyal repeat audience.

Prestigious partnerships with luxury brands are another recognizable calling card of Seabourn. Highlights include dining created by Michelin-starred chef Thomas Keller, health and lifestyle offerings from wellness expert Dr. Andrew Weil, entertainment curated by Broadway lyricist Sir Tim Rice, and immersive destination discovery with UNESCO World Heritage.

A leader in destination innovation, in 2022 Seabourn will once again launch a standard-setting new option for luxury-loving travelers: *Seabourn Venture*, the first of two intimate PC6, purpose-built ships designed and equipped specifically for ultra-luxury expedition cruising. *Seabourn Venture* will explore the world's most remote and coveted regions, with itineraries spanning the globe from the Arctic to the Amazon to Antarctica. Staffed with a world-class Expedition Team of scientists, scholars and wildlife experts, it will also boast two six-person submarines capable of carrying guests to depths of nearly 1,000 feet.

And in January 2023, *Seabourn Sojourn* departs Miami for a once-in-a-lifetime, 140-day *World Cruise*, sailing across three oceans and exploring 61 fascinating ports in 32 countries. With these unforgettable new products, Seabourn sets the stage for new levels of luxury travel, and once again prepares to exceed the expectations of its discerning clientele.

## **About Seabourn**

Seabourn's ultra-luxury resorts at sea represent the pinnacle of small-ship cruising with all ocean-front suites and exceptional amenities. The official cruise partner of UNESCO World Heritage, Seabourn offers unique and immersive destination experiences on every continent on the globe with more than 400 ports ranging from iconic cities to private hideaways. Prestigious partnerships, award-winning cuisine, and a world-class spa all combine to create an unforgettable journey.

### **Contact**

[seabourn.com](http://seabourn.com)



Seabourn



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