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SILK ROAD
SPECTACULAR

LIGHTROOM:
MASAI MARA
MIGRATION

Hobbit Heartland

8 LUXURY
TRENDS
FOR 2015

JOURNEY TO MIDDLE
EARTH IN NEW ZEALAND

8 LUXURY TRENDS FOR 2015

Luxury travel is a lucrative sales proposition so it's crucial to stay on top of the latest trends. Tara Harrison presents next year's top eight



Luxury Lodges of Australia

The very nature of luxury means that it is constantly evolving to wow and surprise guests. That can be by upping the ante on extravagance but increasingly it is to do with tapping into traveller sentiment at the time. While service that pre-empts asking is always welcome, other attributes that align with social consciences, discovery and health are coming to the fore as 2015 draws near.

The Virtuoso Luxe Report for this year highlighted that the desire for luxury travel is the same as in other sectors: authentic experiences, rest and relaxation, and time and connection with loved ones are all essential. Increasingly the accommodation is less important than the experience, with travellers preferring to book a lower class room in a high-end hotel than a high-end room in a less salubrious property.

1. EXTRAVAGANCE IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

Would you be surprised to find one of New York City's top bars and bartenders floating down the Mekong delta? With exclusive rights to small batch liquor producers, Aqua Expedition's new Mekong vessel has just that. From glamping to river cruising and far-flung islands, it seems that the more remote the luxury location, the more likely it will be mind-bogglingly exclusive. The *Aqua Mekong* also boasts one of the world's top chefs, David Thompson, of Nahm renown.

Then there's The Small Maldives Island Company, which has employed the cooking prowess of Australian chef Luke Mangan. You can be in as far flung an atoll as the Maldives and still be treated to the comforts of home.

As for glamping, has there ever been so thin a line between wilderness and luxury as a sheet of khaki tarpaulin? And yet no accoutrement is scrimped on, with Sal Salis on Western Australia's Ningaloo Reef providing an unforgettable and remote beachside camp.

7. MULTI-GENERATIONAL TRAVEL


With family time as precious as ever, those who can afford luxury travel will often opt to bring the whole brood along for the ride. This is something accounted for by luxury expedition ship *Aqua Mekong* which just recently launched on the Mekong. CEO Francesco Galli Zugaro anticipates that families will want to charter out the entire ship. “Buy-outs happen quite often. It’s a perfect setting for a family experience,” Zugaro said.



8. LUXURY VOLUNTEERING

Luxury travel and volunteering are two worlds that have not really overlapped before. After all, luxury travel doesn’t always come with an altruistic factor.

Enter Travelteerism, where indulgence gets a feel-good makeover, which offers clients new perspectives on the country they’re visiting by working with local people on community projects. It provides a deeper experience beyond the bubble of boutique hotels, beaches, and the safari trail – but still incorporates these elements, which makes it the best of both worlds.

It also enables the NGOs and local charities to tap into and profit from their country’s luxury tourism industry in a way they have not been able to before. They currently run tours to Guatemala, Mexico, and Southern Africa. 

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