



Luxury TRAVEL TRENDS

Find out *where* other luxury travellers are going and *what* they're doing there in this glimpse at the booking trends of the clients of Travel Associates, an Australian based travel agency specialising in high-end holidays for experienced travellers.

Where: international destination

Thailand remains a strong performer with bookings for the South-East Asian hotspot accounting for 27% of all forward bookings ▶



Harbour Plaza 8 Degrees, Hong Kong

In the world of five-star standards, luxury hotels are competing to stand out, and visitors to the new Harbour Plaza 8 Degrees in Hong Kong will see a unique optical illusion that makes the lobby feel like the inside of Italy's leaning tower of Pisa. Due to open in October, the contemporary hotel is within easy distance of Kai Tak Airport, close to the shopping and entertainment district of Kowloon and features over 700 guestrooms and suites, two restaurants and landscaped swimming pools, harbour-plaza.com NS

Website reveals Airline Luggage Information

A new website allows passengers to find luggage information for major airlines across the globe with just a few clicks of the mouse. Website founder and former high school algebra teacher, **Luke Dudley** collated the luggage policies of 64 major airlines in over 3,000 airports around the world in order to provide this free service to members of the public. Specific information on carry-on and excess baggage policies of individual airlines is provided by the website, which also allows the user to compare baggage policies and airline loyalty club benefits, luggagelimits.com



The Big Reveal

NEW ZEALAND LODGE LOVERS ARE KEENLY AWAITING THE EARLY 2010 UNVEILING OF NEW ZEALAND'S FAVOURITE LODGE DESIGNER VIRGINIA FISHER'S (PICTURED) REWORKING OF MATAKAURI LODGE ON LAKE WAKATIPU NEAR QUEENSTOWN. THE LODGE

WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT IN 2000 AND WAS RECENTLY PURCHASED BY WALL STREET LEGEND JULIAN ROBERTSON WHO ALREADY OWNS OTHER HIGHLY ACCLAIMED NEW ZEALAND LODGES CAPE KIDNAPPERS AND KAURI CLIFFS. MEGAN CUTHBERT INTERVIEWS VIRGINIA FISHER.

Q: What's the major challenge when designing for a hotel room or lodge?

A: Balancing the desires of the designer to do something special within the budgetary constraints, and also attempting to reflect the appropriate style for the property and its site.

Q: What unique challenges arise when designing a luxury New Zealand Lodge?

A: Usually the lodges that I have been involved in have been on large estates, which allows for distance and privacy for each of the rooms, so the challenge is to showcase the view while capturing the most amount of light and sun.

Q: What look or feel are you trying to evoke with the design for Matakauri Lodge?

A: A light airy modern casual look with

warm materials and texture, lots of nooks and crannies for the guests to curl up in and enjoy the views of the lake and mountains.

Q: How will you go about achieving this look?

A: Still working on it – it will be a surprise! The secret is to make a number of contrasting protected places on different scales to create excitement and interest.

Q: There's a view that the grand hotel lobby is ostentatious and out of date. Do you agree or disagree, and why?

A: The look that the New Zealand lodges have developed is to make the guest feel very much at home – not to diminish or overpower them in any way. Super-grand lobbies don't quite fit into that ethos.



Villa luxury in Thailand

The Patong Penthouse is the latest addition to Villa Getaways' collection of private and luxurious villas in Thailand. Located in close proximity to the famous Patong beach in Phuket, this comfortable four-bedroom villa includes a spacious living area and a master bedroom with its very own balcony, personal Jacuzzi and walk-in closet. The centrepiece of the penthouse is the private swimming pool, which overlooks the Bay of Patong with commanding views of the white sands of Patong beach. villagetaways.com

On The Road in South America

Motorbike enthusiasts can follow the Dakar 2010 motor race on the latest BMW R1200 GS motorcycles with a new luxury adventure company, South America Motorbike Tours. Winding 9,000 kilometres from Santiago to Buenos Aires, the famous race is taking place in South America for only the second time in its 32-year history, and the 17-day adventure takes in the rugged countryside as it follows the race to the finish line to meet the winners. Priced at US \$7,940 for riders and US \$3,720 for passengers, the tour includes a BMW R1200 GS motorcycle 2009, boutique accommodation, bilingual guides and a 4x4 support vehicle with paramedic and driver, samttours.com



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