

Some Travel Top 10s for 2012

Written by Connie Valimont

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So much to do, so little time! As we look forward to a new year, I've looked at some of the trends out there What are you waiting for? Pick one or a few. Your trip of a lifetime starts with a call or email to your travel advisor.

Top 10 Trips of a Lifetime

(14,000 participated in Virtuoso's Travel Dreams Survey, 2011)

- Setting Sail for a World Cruise – completing a circumnavigation has been a travel “badge of honor” since the concept was developed in 1992.
- Sailing the Med on a Private Yacht – Cruise the Greek Isles, Italian Riviera or South of France while enjoying complete privacy and avoiding overcrowded ports.
- Calling on All Seven Continents – Become one of the elite group of globe-trotters who boast passport stamps from every landmass.
- Renting a European Villa – Whether a grand chateau in the Loire Valley or a beach cottage in Brittany, there's an ideal home away from home for you on the Continent.
- Visiting all New Seven Wonders of the World – in case you're wondering, they include Chichen Itza; Christ the Redeemer; the Colosseum; the Great Wall; Machu Picchu; Petra; the Taj Mahal.
- Photographing the “Big Five” on an African Safari – Perhaps Africa's most iconic Wildlife destination, Botswana offers endless photo opportunities & exquisite safari lodges. Other spots with the most chance to see them are South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Tanzania. The “big five” includes lions, leopards, elephants, rhinos and buffaloes!
- Renting a Private Island – Maroon yourself on a private paradise.
- Blasting Off into Suborbital Space – Virgin Galactic's spaceship, Enterprise, will be sending everyday astronauts into the stratosphere soon – exclusively through Virtuoso.
- Chartering a Private Jet – Seamless security; unmatched flexibility; exclusive perks – need we say more?
- Dining your Way through Paris' Best Restaurants – Daniel Rose's much-anticipated Spring restaurant; the nouveau bistro La Regalade Saint-Honore; head to the Right Bank right now!

Top 10 Dream Destinations

(Virtuoso rounded up the hottest new trips out there to whet your travel appetite)

- Australia: All Around Oz – from Ayers Rock to the mesmerizing Great Barrier Reef, Australia is a land of many contrasts.
- Italy: Piedmont by Pedal – Italy's Piedmont region is perfect for a leisurely bike tour. Indulge in local wines, fine cheeses, rare truffles – that's what all the pedaling is for!
- South Africa: from Vineyard to Savanna – Go beyond the safari for tastings at some of South Africa's finest wineries, visit a local arts school, enjoy native storytelling & more.
- New Zealand: South Island Solitude – Kiwi tramping (trekking) goes upscale as you're whisked to a remote tented camp for alpine hikes, helicopter rides, hot tubbing & haute cuisine.
- Greece: A Tall Ship Odyssey - Embark on your own voyage across the Aegean Sea

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aboard an authentic, 30-sail tall ship & visit impressive sites along the way.

- Antarctica: Cool Like an Iceberg – Follow Sir Frances Drake's wake to the White Continent. Zodiac excursions let you watch whales & penguins up close.
- France: Solo Biking in Burgundy – Spin through quaint towns, golden sunflower fields and rolling hills with accommodations & luggage shuttle provided.
- French Polynesia: South Pacific Sailing – Don't limit yourself to a single, luscious island ... sail from Australia to Tahiti and visit beautiful places in between: Fiji, Bora Bora, Tonga, Tahaa.
- China: Misty Detour – Visit the ethereal sandstone pillars of Wulingyuan as part of a monumental journey.
- Ireland: Full Circle Exploration – From the dramatic Dingle Peninsula to the Giant's Causeway, explore the best of Ireland – including a Guinness or two, of course!

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