

The Advisors' Edge

Succeeding with Luxury Travel Clients

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Insights from Latest Travel Preference Study

Today's luxury travelers are demanding a demonstrably intimate level of destination knowledge before committing to a travel consultant. This was one of the topline findings from research conducted among high net worth travelers in August of 2014. The study, commissioned by Untours and conducted by a third-party firm, reveal several important insights:

- **Internet searches fail** to identify precisely the kind of unique experiences sought by travelers returning to Europe. Despite the fact that many prefer to shop, themselves, for fares and accommodations, a significant percentage of study **participants admit that they would benefit from knowledgeable insights from travel professionals.**
- Travelers interviewed for the study reported that one of the top three attributes sought in a travel professional is their **firsthand knowledge** of accommodations and cultural attractions.
- High net worth travelers are willing to pay premium fees for **experiences customized** to their own unique preferences.
- **Self-sufficiency and mid-level destination familiarity** are both sources of personal pride for Americans returning to Europe for deeper-dive visits.

Private Access Journeys Debuts

Untours launches new European luxury travel service. Initially covering Paris and Florence, *Private Access Journeys* (PAJ) offers high-end luxury city-center apartments *and* hotels, concierge-level service on site, and an incomparable menu of unique local experiences tailored to travelers' specific interests and passions.

"After 40 years in the apartment-based vacation market," Untours General Manager Brian Taussig-Lux explains, "we are responding to a real need. Our research reveals that travelers want memorable experiences and they are interested in luxury apartment rentals as an alternative to hotels."



"Our staff has the unique ability to facilitate private access to some of the world's most exclusive treasures while providing personal service throughout a clients' stay," says Kirkpatrick. "In addition to increasing interest in European destinations, we are finding that travelers want to go deeper into the local cultures for their first, as well as return visits, to a favorite place in Europe," she reports. "This interest is coming from travelers *and* travel consultants who seek expertise that just isn't available on the web."

Making Dollars & Sense of Key Trends

Recent data on market trends reveal surprising—and important—insights into high net worth travelers' motivators and desires.

- The American Affluence Research Center (AARC) reports in its latest survey participants with an average net worth of \$3.1 million, found that 77% are planning to spend the same or more for international vacation travel. Multigenerational travel to a favorite destination was among the top activities mentioned.
- Europe is dominating 2015 bookings, and luxury travel is reported to be higher than a year ago, according to Travel Leaders Group's luxury agents, Travel Weekly reported on 1/28/15.
- "The incredibly strong U.S. dollar, versus the euro, is already having an impact on travel to Europe," Protravel International's president Patrick Fragale has said. "Luxury travelers are savvy, and while they may spend more than the average American they still want the greatest value for the money they're spending."
- In a recent interview AARC president Ron Kurtz advised that, "The older affluent already have the material goods they want or need and will tend to spend more on travel. For this market, the better service would be to help them find good quality and good values."

"We can arrange after hours visits to Versailles and access to private wings of the Uffizi museum in Florence. Hot air balloons over Tuscany, helicopter tours over Paris and the surrounding countryside; the sky is not the limit here," assures PAJ Director Patti Kirkpatrick, CTC.

"We are pleased with the response from clients and agents so far. Early indicators show that for high-end, travel-savvy clients, this new type of service is just what the market wants," reports Untours General Manager, Brian Taussig-Lux.

The new service offers "Hand crafted dream vacations" with concierge-level service on site in Paris and Florence. PAJ works closely with travel professionals and their clients in the planning and management of each vacation. Contact **Patti Kirkpatrick CTC, Director**, at **888-702-6130** or visit **www.PrivateAccessJourneys.com** for information.