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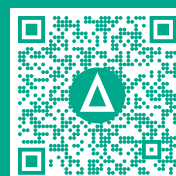
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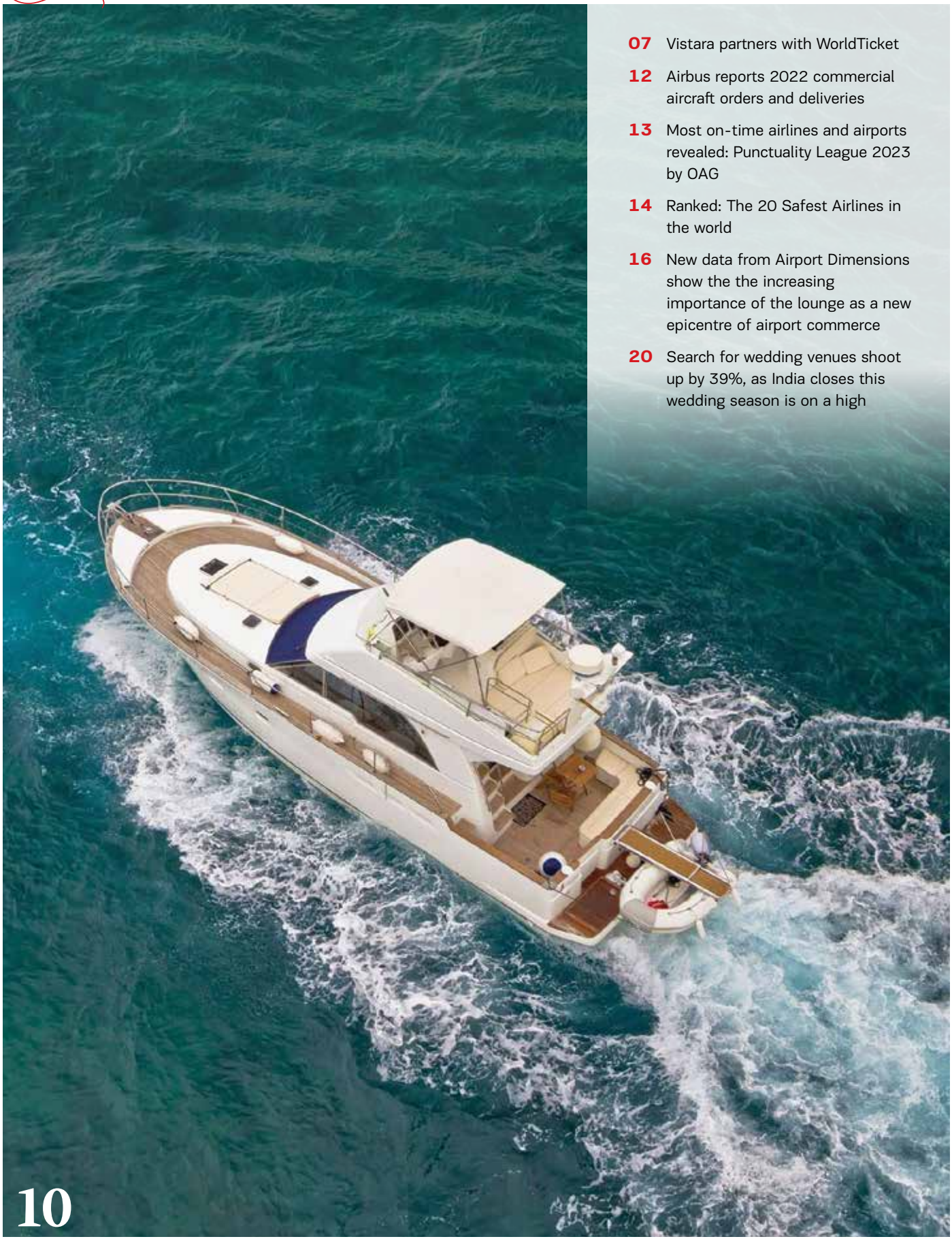
Spain's
Michelin-starred
restaurants

Seville
An inspiring
Destination



Architectural
landmarks in
Copenhagen

Helsinki's
growing reputation
as world-class
food city

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LUXURY AND LIFESTYLE TRAVEL MAGAZINE travel SPAN

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Qatar Ranked World's Safest Country for the Fifth Year in a Row

Qatar retrieved its spot in 2019 and has topped the list ever since. Qatar continues to be ranked as the safest country in the world by the Numbeo index 2023, a database of user-contributed data about cities and countries worldwide. This is the fifth year in a row that Qatar has claimed the top spot, marking a continuation of the distinctive position enjoyed by the country globally in terms of safety.

A total of 142 countries were covered by the Numbeo Safety Index by Country 2023, with Qatar ranking first with a score of 85.2. The other countries in the top 10 are the UAE, Taiwan (China), Isle of Man, Oman, Hong Kong (China), Armenia, Japan, Switzerland and Bahrain.

In another recognition for Qatar in terms of safety, Doha continues to be ranked the second safest city in the world by the Numbeo Safety Index by City 2023. The Qatari capital has been ranked second for the sixth year running.

Doha's score in the 2023 index, which has surveyed a total of 416 cities, is 85.5. Abu Dhabi in the UAE tops the list of safest cities with 88.8, while the others in the top 10 are Taipei (Taiwan, China), Ajman (UAE), Sharjah (UAE), Quebec City (Canada), Dubai (UAE), San Sebastian (Spain), Bern (Switzerland) and Eskisehir (Turkey).

Conversely, Qatar's ranking in the Numbeo Crime Index by City 2023 is 415 with a score of 14.5. Abu Dhabi is 416th with 11.2.

The Numbeo database has been publishing annual reports since 2009, based on the crime rates in countries around the world. The index of crimes is measured according to the laws of the countries, as there are acts that constitute crimes in some countries while they are not deemed crimes in some other nations, which gives a real measure of the crime rate in countries in accordance with applicable laws.

Qatar has an ever-changing landscape, ancient alleys located in contrast against the modern skyline, and varied topography. Since the country is a peninsula, it offers the perfect blend of sun, sand, and sea.

Here are some of the top attractions to explore in Qatar:

The National Museum of Qatar, designed by Jean Nouvel, draws inspiration from and recreates the naturally occurring crystal formations - the desert rose. The museum houses 11 galleries which allow visitors to witness the changing fortunes of the country. Spread across 430,500 square feet, it gives a voice to Qatar's heritage whilst celebrating its future. Souq Waqif is one of the traditional markets in Qatar that holds prominence among visitors and residents alike. The labyrinthine alleys present cultural wonders like regional music, artistic shows, and local eateries and restaurants.

Khor Al Adaid, a UNESCO-recognized site, is one of the few places in the world where the sea meets the desert. The undulating sand dunes of Qatar are a popular destination for recreational safari and dune bashing. Qatar National Library where every book is visible is designed by the world-renowned architect Rem Koolhaas. It is built to resemble two pieces of paper that are pulled apart and folded diagonally at the corners to create a shell-like structure. The library provides a holistic environment that fosters learning, growth, and innovation.

The Pearl - Qatar is a man-made island spread across 4 million sqm. It houses several hotels, charming cafes, and a number of restaurants. It also has an iconic marina view with luxury boutiques, residential buildings, and more.

Katara Cultural Village is a self-styled cultural village nestled between the modern city lights of Doha. With a few noteworthy mosques, a large amphitheatre, and a high-end store, it is the go-to destination for art, culture, and cuisine.

The destination is also picking up as a preferred location for MICE activities. The purpose-built venues like Doha Exhibition and Convention Center (DECC) and Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC) make it the perfect business setup. The world-class indoor and outdoor facilities make it an ideal pick for all corporate events.

We are on



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Vistara partners with WorldTicket to enable connections on Germany's Deutsche Bahn Train Network



Vistara, India's finest full-service carrier and a joint venture of Tata group and Singapore Airlines entered into an interline partnership with WorldTicket (W2), part of the 777 Travel Tech group and the only authorised distributor for Europe's largest railway operator, Deutsche Bahn. The partnership enables Vistara to offer multimodal itineraries to its customers, empowering them to seamlessly book air and rail travel throughout Germany and other European cities on a single itinerary. Through this partnership, Vistara becomes the only Indian carrier to offer such a service for travellers to and from India.

Vistara customers can now easily connect from any one of 16,000 train stations in Germany to Frankfurt Airport and fly Vistara to Delhi, and vice versa. In addition to train stations

across Germany, Vistara customers can also travel to and from Amsterdam (the Netherlands), Brussels (Belgium), and Zurich or Basel (Switzerland) on Deutsche Bahn's extensive network.

Powered by W2's GDS aggregation technology, Deutsche Bahn's Rail&Fly product enables these flexible multimodal travel options for passengers. In addition, Deutsche Bahn's Interline and Codeshare products with scheduled high-speed rail services create an eco-friendly transit option for European travellers.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Deepak Rajawat, Chief Commercial Officer, Vistara said, "We are delighted to partner with WorldTicket and offer Deutsche Bahn's extensive network of destinations within Germany and the rest of Europe to our customers. This partnership is aimed

at making the travel experience of our customers simpler and seamless as they go beyond Frankfurt to other parts of Germany and Europe on a single itinerary."

"We are excited to be working with Vistara", says **Peer Winter, Vice President of Commercial Business Development at WorldTicket.**

"With the multimodal interlining partnership in place, Vistara can offer a richer experience to its passengers while increasing ancillary revenue opportunities and encouraging brand loyalty."

The flight segment of the customer's journey is being operated and marketed under Vistara's 'UK' IATA designator code; the train segment is operated by Deutsche Bahn and marketed by WorldTicket (W2 IATA designator code).

From the customer's perspective, they will book a single itinerary that includes both flight and rail reservations and only need to check in separately for each segment. Once passengers arrive at Frankfurt (FRA), they can clear immigration, collect their bags and proceed to the railway station at Frankfurt Airport to board their train.

"The partnership also offers Vistara and its customers unprecedented access to Europe's largest economy, which serves as a global travel destination and a gateway to the world. We look forward to continuing to partner with Vistara as we work to expand options for travellers across the globe," added Peer.

Vistara is India's highest-rated airline on Skytrax and TripAdvisor, and it has been the winner of several 'Best Airline' awards, besides being lauded for world-class cabin cleanliness and upholding high safety standards. The airline has recently been featured amongst World's Top 20 Airlines while being recognised as the 'Best Airline in India and Southern Asia' for the second time in a row, 'Best Airline Staff Service in India and Southern Asia' for the fourth consecutive year, 'Best Cabin Crew in India and Southern Asia' for the second time in a row and 'Best Business Class in India and Southern Asia' at the coveted Skytrax World Airline Awards 2022.



Travel Insurance

An indispensable element for hassle-free travel

By Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO – Asego

With the booming tourism sector, 2023 will definitely witness the metamorphosis of travel assistance & insurance from a prerequisite to a trip essential. “Stay protected, so that you can be rest assured and do what you’re meant to do on a trip – Explore the world with peace of mind!” says Mr Dev Karvat, Founder & CEO, Asego.

The travel trade witnessed a massive upsurge in travel volumes as compared to 2021. Thanks to the enhanced mode of transportation and regulatory changes introduced by the Indian government to boost tourism. I am confident that 2023 will only amplify this emergence with recent technological advancements shaping the new market dynamics in India.

Today, India’s tourism and travel insurance industry is experiencing a strong period of growth, driven by the burgeoning overseas, domestic and inbound travel. You will be surprised to know that over 75% of Indians who travelled to Dubai, Thailand and Maldives last year purchased Travel Insurance, which was not the case earlier. Not just that, on analysing customers’ recent buying patterns, we realised that they have now grown highly product sensitive.

They now seek more value, rather than just going for undervalued and inexpensive ones. They are willing to pay more for their products, provided the price of the product justifies the value they offer. And thus, travel insurance is now also being considered as a huge revenue-generating variable and offered as a very lucrative travel ancillary service option by many of our prominent travel partners.

Well, having said that, I cannot thank our travel agent partners enough, as they are one of the most vital pillars of this great Indian travel insurance revolution. They want their customers to have a holistic experience and therefore provide a complete travel package including travel assistance and insurance to their customers. This

change in the mindset has enabled us to lead as experts in this domain, and it is now much easier for us to reach out and understand their customer needs, to design tailor-made benefits for them. Additionally, we are equipping our partners with personalized marketing support to increase consumer awareness, cutting-edge technology for increased operational efficiency and dedicated relationship managers to help them boost conversions.

To further kindle this growth, we are also reintroducing the ‘Travel Agent’s Engagement Programme’, one of the biggest initiatives that we commenced almost a decade ago with a vision to enrich pioneering minds in the industry. Today it is known to be a platform to enable our clients to tap various ancillary revenue generation opportunities that enables them to upsell.

Now, with the recent spurt of COVID-19 cases in China, Japan, the United States of America, the Republic of Korea and Brazil, travellers have become more cautious and are seeking relevant protection plans with higher sum insured and value-added services that cover unforeseen medical expenses and ensure them a hassle-free experience, throughout their trip. With ‘Duty of Care’ at the core of everything we do and as torchbearers of the travel assistance

and insurance industry, we consider it our responsibility to enable it for each traveller.

Asego’s array of travel assistance and insurance solutions safeguard travellers against various medical contingencies such as Covid-19, emergency hospitalisation, dental treatments, out-patient care etc. and other non-medical eventualities such as missed/delayed flights and hotel/flight cancellations while on a trip.

With millennials reinforcing the global travel resurgence, we also offer special covers for travel risks such as loss and damage of gadgets, cyber security issues, identity theft, credit/debit card fraud, etc. along with specially curated protection plans for senior citizens, cruises, extreme adventure sports and other niche travel experiences. Additionally, our range of assistance services adds value and serves as a sigh of relief for every traveller, especially the ones who conclude their journeys without filing any claims.

We recently rescued a trekker struck by acute mountain sickness from the Everest base camp to the nearest medical facility through an air ambulance, where she could recover and recuperate from the unforeseen medical condition before returning home. We’re glad that the trekker had opted for our Extreme Adventure sports cover, which helped relay details of the incident to all concerned parties in no time and the emergency evacuation team could kick into action immediately.

All said and done, even the most meticulously planned trips could fall prey to unforeseen hurdles and result in a great deal of financial, physical, and emotional burden. Hence, I genuinely advise every traveller to first understand and identify their travel requirements and then opt for a travel protection plan that checks all their boxes, so that they can be rest assured and do what they’re meant to do on a trip – Explore the world with peace of mind!

Today, India’s tourism and travel insurance industry is experiencing a strong period of growth, driven by the burgeoning overseas, domestic and inbound travel.



Five reasons why we love yachting in Dubai & you should too

Here's why you have to charter a yacht in Dubai.

Want to pack a punch this vacation? Then you must sail away to Dubai to relax and party on a personalized luxury charter yacht!

Subsequently, you get an all-new dimension to view the city from the sea and enjoy its culture and heritage. And if you're a person not wishing to spend lavishly on food, restaurants, and hotels. Then taking a luxurious rental yacht and setting out to wake to a new horizon is the best thing to do.

However, out of the many benefits depending on the package you've chosen, a charter luxury yacht offers

scuba diving, riding jet skis, luxurious on-deck pool rooms, etc., all in the middle of the sea. So here's why you have to charter a yacht in Dubai. Continue reading to watch the boom!

Dubai has become one of the fastest developing cities/tourist spots on the planet. Millions of people come to Dubai every year to visit the many attractions this place has to offer. From the scorching desert to a night under the stars to belly dancers, Dubai has kept its cultural heritage alive by investing in tourism. Tourism is perhaps the only thing that is keeping the Middle Eastern oasis

afloat magnificently and for good reason too. Yachting is one of the primary tourist attractions in Dubai. It is a perfect home to plenty of marine creatures. It also has a conservation ground and nesting area for sea turtles. Dubai provides a number of top-notch yachting services.

Dubai has one of the best sunsets in the entire world. Due to the ever-rising Dubai skyline, the sunset looks like something out of a science fiction movie with rays of light reflecting on the buildings. If you were out at sea and were to notice such a spectacle, you will surely fall in love with the city.

Why charter a luxury yacht in Dubai

Dubai is blessed with a 560 km coastline with a beautiful sea just a few paces away. And it's home to some

exotic marine creatures. However, it is also the best place for yachting as it is composed of different islands. The city has its glory, well known for its warm climate and the largest man-made isles, such as the Palm Jumeirah. It is the gateway for your family to have a quality time sailing across the crystal seas in yachts to carry back home a cherished memory. Also, I bet it can become a lifetime achievement for you as the city offers the best tourist attractions on land and water.

Top five benefits you get from yachting in Dubai

Hush! Let me tell you a secret. It would be best if you considered these mind-blowing reasons as there are lots you can do on the waters of Dubai. But keep it top secret until you surprise your family members with a revolutionizing vacation in the upcoming holidays.

1. A breathtaking view of magnificence

Watching the sea from the land is a common experience nowadays as Dubai has allowed its tourists to travel on luxury yachts on the water to give a breathtaking view of the magnificent city! Just think of it. Looking at the mesmerizing skyline, the clear blue waters, and above all, the glory of the beautiful buildings. Sounds luring, right?

2. Explore the uttermost parts of Dubai

Tired of reading travel guides and books about the usual tourist spots? Then taking a luxury charter yacht in Dubai is your right choice to reach Dubai's exotic and unknown serenity-filled places. You have an opportunity to visit unnamed beaches, islands, harbours, and whatnot! Moreover, you get a chance to slip into the luxury yacht for some relaxation while sipping some drinks which you can never find in any of the hotels and resorts on land.

3. Luxury, comfort, and privacy

You are the king of the rented luxury yacht and enjoy a lavish lifestyle within

the vessel. It includes a spacious lounge, cosy bedrooms, a deck, sitting, and dining areas, etc., to have a fun and fantastic time with your loved ones. And above all, you're completely shut down from the mechanized world on the shore. You get some entertainment on the deck to make your sailing a blissful experience, where you order and cook your favourite meal. And some luxury yachts in Dubai offer dancing floors to rock and roll throughout the night. So in a luxury yacht, you say, Let me be done!

4. All play and no work on the yacht

Sounds intriguing? Well, no mommies and daddies are allowed to cook and work on board. All you have to do is to enjoy the maximum and click some excellent photos to carry back home. You get a personalized professional crew to do everything for you, which includes changing your bedspreads and providing you breakfast on time. Also, you get a chance to enjoy fishing, scuba diving, or jet skiing if you've opted for that offer before booking.

5. Get some exclusive, surprising benefits

Want to host a meeting, party, or festive celebration? Don't worry, as

yacht companies are willing to offer that service too! Before you leave, just notify the crew; they're there to give the air of pomp and joy when you return. Think of it.

How much your loved one will enjoy the bash and have it as a special moment in their heart But to get fitted into your vacation, you must consider the budget. Not everyone can afford to stay in a luxurious hotel and spend money for a few days in a crowded city. So chartering a yacht is an affordable option. You pay in advance to relieve your financial burden of the food and the stay. Above all, no yacht compromises its luxury despite the cheap rates. Hence your board without any hesitation!

You me & the sea

It's time you get a twist to your vacation by chartering a luxury yacht in Dubai and having some enjoyable moments alone or as a family!

Party with DJ on Board

That's right, with powerful music systems; you can light up the night with a party you will never forget. Some yachts even contain custom-built dance floors for maximum dancing pleasure. Partying in Dubai has never been better than on a yacht.



Airbus reports 2022 commercial aircraft orders and deliveries



Airbus delivered 661* commercial aircraft to 84 customers in 2022 and registered 1,078 gross new orders. Airbus' end December 2022 backlog stood at 7,239 aircraft.



“In 2022 we served 84 customers with 661 deliveries, an increase of 8 per cent compared to 2021. That’s obviously less than we were targeting but given the complexity of the operating environment I want to thank the teams and our partners for the hard work and the ultimate result,” said **Guillaume Faury**, Airbus Chief Executive Officer. “The significant order intake covering all our aircraft families including freighters reflects the strength and competitiveness of our product line. We continue our ramp-up trajectory to deliver on our backlog.”

In 2022, deliveries included:

	2022	2021
A220 Family	53	50
A320 Family	516	483
A330 Family	32	18
A350 Family	60*	55
A380	-	5
Total	661*	611

* After a reduction of two aircraft (2 A350-900 AEROFLOT) previously recorded as sold in December 2021 for which a transfer was not possible due to international sanctions against Russia.

Airbus equally won 1,078 new orders (820 net) across all programmes and

market segments, including several high-profile commitments from some of the world’s leading carriers. In aircraft units, Airbus recorded a net book-to-bill ratio significantly above one.

Per programme, the A220 won 127 firm gross new orders. The A320neo Family won 888 gross new orders. In the widebody segment, Airbus won 63 gross new orders including 19 A330s and 44 A350s of which 24 were for the newly launched A350F.

The 2022 full-year financial results will be disclosed on 16 February 2023.

Most on-time airlines and airports revealed: Punctuality League 2023 by OAG

OAG's expert team has analyzed 365 days' worth of flight data (1 Jan-31 Dec 2022) to name the airlines and airports with the best on-time performance in the following categories:

Airlines:

- Top 20 Global Airlines
- Top 20 Mega Airlines
- Top 20 LCC Airlines
- Top 10 Airlines per Region

Airports:

- Top 20 Global Airports
- Top 20 Mega Airports
- Top 10 Airports per Region

Garuda Indonesia (GA) is the most punctual global airline with an OTP of 95.6%. However, in 2022 they only operated 25% of the flights they had in 2019.

There are seven Asian-based carriers in the Top 20, and six based in Latin America. The ASPAC carriers are operating on average at just under 70% of their 2019 frequency, and the Latin American carriers at 92%.

The only United States carrier in the Top 20 is Delta Air Lines (DL) in 17th position, the next highest US airlines (including their positions) are:

- **Alaska Airlines** (AS) 28th
- **United Airlines** (UA) 29th
- **American Airlines** (AA) 37th

• **Hawaiian Airlines** (HA) 42nd

There are no major European carriers in the Top 20, perhaps not a surprise due to airport disruption in the summer of 2022. Only ten of the Top 20 carriers from 2019 appear in the 2022 Top 20.

Eurowings (EW) recorded the highest number of cancellations of the Top 20, with an average rate of 3.49% of flights being cancelled in 2022.

Japan's major carriers perform well, with **All Nippon Airways** (NH) taking sixth spot and **Japan Airlines** (JL) in seventh place. The average OTP for this group is 86.7%. The average cancellation rate for this group is 0.89%.





Ranked: **The 20 Safest Airlines** In The World

AirlineRatings.com has just released its annual list of the world's 20 safest airlines. The list ranks the largest and best-known carriers and the safest low-cost airlines.

It's been a rough few years for the airlines, from the massive slump in air travel caused by the pandemic to high-profile scenes like last week's meltdown for Southwest Airlines, which cancelled thousands of flights across

the U.S. during the holiday season and has sparked an investigation by the Department of Transportation.

But if there's any good news when it comes to the airlines, it's the safety of air travel today: "I would say the



airline system is incredibly safe," says Geoffrey Thomas, editor-in-chief of AirlineRatings.com, which monitors the safety and in-flight product for 385 airlines.

"The Covid pandemic has put [an] enormous strain on airlines across the globe with lengthy delays and flight cancellations testing even the most

faithful and forgiving passengers," says Thomas. "From a safety perspective, airlines have done a remarkable job in getting their pilots and cabin crew to operational flying, and their maintenance engineers are the unsung heroes who have looked after the aircraft. There have been no accidents over the pandemic period attributable to Covid."

In coming up with its list, AirlineRatings.com considered a range of factors, including fleet age, serious incidents, fatalities, audits from aviation's governing and industry bodies, industry-leading safety initiatives and more.

"Our top twenty safest airlines are all standouts in the industry and are at the forefront of safety, innovation and launching of new aircraft," says Thomas. "In fact, the safety margins between these top twenty airlines are very small—they are all outstanding airlines."

Thomas says the site only looked at serious incidents in making its determinations. "All airlines have incidents every day and many are aircraft manufacture issues, not airline operational problems," says Thomas. "It is the way the flight crew handles incidents that determines a good airline from an unsafe one. So just lumping all incidents together is very misleading."

Coming out on top this year is Qantas, which has been named the safest airline for 2023. It replaces last year's winner, Air New Zealand. It's not the first time that Qantas has won: The 100-year-old Australian carrier was named the world's safest airline from 2014 to 2017. In 2018, it was in the top 20 when AirlineRatings awarded 20 airlines jointly. Then it won again for three years in a row: 2019, 2020 and 2021.

The Australian airline has been a leader in the development of: Future Air Navigation System; the flight data recorder to monitor plane and later crew performance; automatic landings using Global Navigation Satellite System as well as precision approaches around mountains in cloud using RNP.

Qantas was the lead airline with real-time monitoring of its engines across its fleet using satellite communications, which has enabled the airline to detect problems before they become a major safety issue.

A number of U.S. carriers also made the top 20 list. Alaska Airlines came in first among the U.S. carriers, followed by Hawaiian Airlines, United, American Airlines and Delta Air Lines. "No big surprises this year with the major airlines continuing to pour resources into their pilot training and aircraft," says Thomas. "The burden has been far greater than normal, bringing aircraft back from storage and [doing] additional training to get pilots back to work after Covid." AirlineRatings' annual report also included the 20 safest low-cost airlines, with the carriers listed alphabetically. U.S. carriers Allegiant, Frontier, JetBlue, Southwest, Spirit and Westjet made the cut.

"All airlines have incidents every day, and many are aircraft or engine manufacture issues, not airline operational problems," Geoffrey Thomas, said. "It is the way the flight crew handles these incidents that determines a good airline from an unsafe one."

Full list of the top 20 Safest Airlines For 2023

1. Qantas, 2. Air New Zealand, 3. Etihad Airways, 4. Qatar Airways, 5. Singapore Airlines, 6. TAP Air Portugal, 7. Emirates, 8. Alaska Airlines, 9. EVA Air, 10. Virgin Australia/Atlantic, 11. Cathay Pacific Airways, 12. Hawaiian Airlines, 13. SAS, 14. United Airlines, 15. Lufthansa/Swiss Group, 16. Finnair, 17. British Airways, 18. KLM, 19. American Airlines, 20. Delta Air Lines

The 20 Safest Low-Cost Airlines For 2023

Air Arabia, AirAsia Group (AirAsia AirAsia X AirAsia Thailand AirAsia Philippines and AirAsia India), Allegiant, Air Baltic, EasyJet, FlyDubai, Frontier, Indigo, Jetstar Group, Jetblue, Ryanair, Scoot, Southwest, Spicejet, Spirit, Vueling, Vietjet, Volaris, Westjet, Wizz, **in alphabetical order*

New data from Airport Dimensions shows the increasing importance of the lounge as a new epicentre of airport commerce

Airport Dimensions' new *Airport Experience Research* has revealed that 57% of frequent travellers surveyed visit the lounge at some point in their travels. As demand to visit lounges continues to grow, so too does the demand for enhanced retail experiences while enjoying these spaces and travellers are willing to pay for access to them. A quarter of travellers visit due to the class

of their flights, nearly a fifth (19%) access these spaces as part of loyalty programmes such as Priority Pass, and the same number (19%) via their memberships with elite airlines. A very similar number (18%) will pay directly for lounge entry.

Travellers are increasingly utilizing these spaces for enjoyment as part of their journeys for leisure purposes rather than for business. More than half

(56%) use lounge spaces in order to access traditional, business facilities, however more than three-quarters (78%) access these spaces for food and 68% gain access in order to make use of leisure amenities.

The research also revealed the desire from travellers for access to digital services when at the lounge. Coming out as the top digital priority for travellers was access to flight information, with 83% citing this as their top concern. 80% said the ability to order food and beverage online was a priority while 72% wanted to be able to book lounge amenities digitally. These practical services understandably sit as top priorities for travellers but interestingly, almost two-thirds (65%) said access to online shopping while at the lounge was important. This comes in stark contrast to the just 12% who felt access to online shopping in the lounge was not important to them.

Travellers are also willing to pay more for an enhanced journey with





over a third (68%) saying they would be happy to pay for premium food and beverage options. More than half (56%) also said they would be keen to splash out and pay for grooming, personal care and spa services to further augment their airport experiences.

Travellers also welcome the chance to engage with brands while in the lounge. 70% say that themed and sponsored brand areas in the lounge

area of interest and almost three-quarters (73%) would be open to purchasing products displayed as a result. Four-fifths of travellers (80%) want the opportunity to sample F&B products and 73% said they would be open to sampling perfume and cosmetics brands.

Stephen Hay, Global Strategy Director of Airport Dimensions, said; "The line between the lounge and

traditional airport commerce is blurring. While airports in the past have seen lounges as somewhat of a black hole for retail spending, it is now clear that they have the potential to become solid drivers of revenue.

Whilst these new revenue opportunities are important, we should not forget that the primary function of the airport lounge is to provide an amazing and increasingly customised experience for each guest."

The Airport Dimensions Changing Airport Experience survey was conducted in partnership with leading market research agency **Dynata**. The research draws from the experiences of more than 8,500 air travellers covering a wide and representative cross-section of demographics.

Travellers are increasingly utilizing these spaces for enjoyment as part of their journeys for leisure purposes rather than for business.

Book a cruise

for your next holiday in 2023



What a better way to bring a bit of excitement during the coldest months of the year than by planning your next holiday! While there are so many different options to choose from, booking a *cruise* is one of the most popular choices amongst tourists from all around the world. If you are wondering why that is, here are the top reasons why cruises are great for holidays - and why you should consider it for yours too!

It's easy to book

There are a lot of misconceptions about booking cruises. Many people seem to think that the process is more complicated than it actually is. However, if you book through Click&Boat, you will find the exact opposite. You will be able to type in your chosen location and duration for a boat hire together with other preferences (e.g. the type of boat you want to cruise in, whether you want it to be skippered, etc.). A number of

results will then be presented to you, so all you need to do is choose the most suitable one for you and your budget!

You can visit multiple destinations

One of the biggest advantages of spending your holiday on a cruise is the fact you can visit more than one location in a short period of time. For instance, if you have originally booked your *cruise in Corfu*, you are free to explore the beautiful island as well as



the neighbouring countries, such as Italy, Croatia, Albania and so on. This leaves you a lot of room for exciting adventures and spontaneous decisions while on holiday.

It's super convenient

Depending on what kind of boat you choose for your cruise, it can take away most of the typical worries of a holiday. There is no need to book accommodation or figure out the transportation between one coastal

town to another. A cruise allows you to essentially combine the comforts of a hotel room with the adventures of a road trip, all in one place, making it super convenient!

A unique way of exploring

Cruising is a highly unique way to explore both new and already visited holiday destinations. It allows you to see the country from a whole different angle, as you are able to witness the local natural wonders. Such attractions as caves, rock formations, islands as well as exotic flora and fauna can typically only be seen from the water. On the other hand, you also have a selection of coastal towns, beaches and other tourist spots to visit along the way.

Ultimate relaxation

If you like to have a bit of calm and quiet during your holidays, there is no better place to be than on a private cruise! You may soak up the sun in a tranquil environment while sipping on a cold drink as well as enjoy a refreshing swim in the turquoise blue waters. It truly cannot get any more relaxing and enjoyable than this.

Final word

Cruises may not be everyone's cup of tea, however, it is safe to say that most people will agree on them being highly convenient and overall a great value for money. It is a brilliant holiday option for everyone, whether that's families with children, couples or solo travellers and the boat hire can be customised to your specific needs and wants!



Search for wedding venues shoot up by 39%, as India closes this wedding season on a high



- Highest interest was shown by Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata respectively
- 29% jump in interest for wedding venues vs pre-covid
- 13% increase in venue searches was observed in October, November, and December 2022 as compared to the previous quarter



This wedding season, Weddingz.in India's largest online platform offering wedding venues and related services witnessed a 39% increase in search for wedding venues in the last month of the quarter ending in December 2022 vs the previous quarter ending in September 2022. Mumbai has shown the highest interest in wedding venue searches, followed by Delhi and Kolkata. The recovery in sentiment is full as demonstrated by the December 2022 trend, which is a 29% jump in interest vs the last pre-covid December which was in 2019.

Marking the kick-off of the year-end wedding season, the full quarter ending December 2022 itself saw a 13% increase in interest and search for venues as compared to the previous quarter ending Sept 2022.

Talking about the findings, **Aditya Sharma, Business Head, Weddingz.in** said, *"The increased interest in wedding venue searches is indicative of the big shift the industry is currently undergoing. The digitization wave has turned this albeit traditional industry into a consumer-first digital marketplace. 'Remote' planning or 'Plan from anywhere' has enabled even conventionally run businesses to connect, collaborate and seamlessly deliver their*

services. After a long period of lull, the industry is in high gear, to deliver not just on the pent-up demand but also create solutions for the new-age couple. Needless to say, the wed-tech marriage is here to stay."

As the industry strides back to normalcy, Weddingz.in, recently crossed a landmark number of 35,000 banquet listings on its website. The company has witnessed a 45% increase in the number of venues listed on the platform since 2019.

Estimated to be \$50 billion industry, the Indian weddings market was on the cusp of change, which accelerated due to the pandemic. A recent survey by Weddingz.in revealed that the pandemic has given a significant push to 'digitization' and the growth of online wedding platforms. There has been a rise in awareness and usage of online wedding platforms. In fact, the survey shows that over 63% of millennials prefer planning weddings through online platforms.

The study also reveals the reasons for the inclination towards online wedding platforms. Over 60% of individuals prefer to plan weddings online as it is an affordable choice. Nearly 70% of consumers feel that online wedding mediums are easy to use, and offer better customization and a variety of options.

FiturNext 2023 launches four days dedicated to sustainability with the presentation of the report “Towards a regenerative tourism”



- The document, presented during the first day of FITUR, emphasises the value of the regeneration of the natural environment as a tourism model to contribute to sustainability and the fight against climate change.

Niels Olsen, Minister of Tourism of Ecuador, and Marta Domènech, Director of Tourism of Catalonia, are among the most prominent voices at this year's FiturNext, who will participate in two round tables with industry experts.

FiturNext, the FITUR Observatory dedicated to promoting good tourism practices that value sustainability in alliance with **CAF** - Development Bank of Latin America, has launched four conferences that highlight the importance of contributing to the regeneration of the natural environment through tourism. One of the most important aspects of the inauguration was the presentation of the report “**Towards a regenerative tourism**”, a document that includes good sustainable

practices and the main conclusions of the analysis carried out by the Observatory throughout this edition.

Francisco Rodríguez, head of the tourism area at Ideas for Change, the entity that has developed the research, was in charge of explaining the key points of the report, stressing “that the objective of tourism must be to have a clearly positive impact. To this end, regenerative tourism is the strongest bet”.

Prize-giving ceremony with the protagonists of the event

The celebration of the awards ceremony for the winning and finalist initiatives of the 2023 Challenge is one of the highlights of the edition. **Oscar Caro**, CEO and Founder of **Plogging Tour**, **Sandra Benbeniste**, Director of the **Iberostar Group** EMEA Sustainability Office, and **Nani Angulo** and **Juan Andrés Pozueta**, co-founders of **Green Pepper Travel**, collected the awards during the ceremony. It is worth mentioning the presence of **Christian Asinelli**, Vice-President Director of Strategic Programming of the **CAF** Presidency, and **Dr. Daniela Moreno**, member of the **FiturNext** Advisory Board, who presented the awards together with the Ideas for Change team.

The presentation was followed by the round table discussion “From corporate social responsibility to sectoral social responsibility” moderated by **Javi Creus**, Founder and Strategy Director of Ideas for Change.

The celebration of the awards ceremony for the winning and finalist initiatives of the 2023 Challenge is one of the highlights of the edition.

During the session, sector experts such as **Miwi Clavera**, Managing Director of **Dirse**, highlighted the union between companies to share challenges and seek solutions together. To these words, **Antonia del Toro**, CSR Director of **Grupo Piñero**, added how collaboration between companies and sectors can help to improve the world through awareness-raising movements on sustainability.

Asinelli commented that the organisation is implementing an agenda to become the green bank of Latin America and the Caribbean, dedicating 40% of its funding to projects linked to climate change and biodiversity. In this sense, we will also contribute to the development of sustainable and regenerative tourism that leads to the restoration and enhancement of the region's rich natural and cultural heritage, and that values ecosystem services.

An inauguration that sets the agenda for FiturNext 2023

Throughout the day, the stand has also hosted dialogues with the winning initiatives of the edition to

learn more about how they contribute to a more responsible tourism with the environment and the local community. **Caro** held a conversation with **Juan Martorell**, deputy director of the Consejo Superior de Deportes, and **Beatriz Soliva**, director of institutional relations of Plogging Tour, about sport as a tool for territorial transformation. On the other hand, **Benbeniste** and the journalist and consultant **Isabel Benítez**, discussed how to regenerate the environment to revalue tourism.

Finally, the day closed with **Angulo** and **Pozueta**, in a dialogue with the journalist **Kris Ubach**. During the session, the speakers shared strategies and tools for improving planetary health through regenerative tourism.

The first day kicked off **FiturNext 2023**, which will take place at the **Ifema** exhibition centre until Saturday 21 January. The programme included a round table discussion with **Marta Domènech**, Director of Tourism of Catalonia, and **Isabel Vidal Tomás**, Director of Tourism of the Balearic Islands, on “Regenerative public policies”, moderated by Francisco Rodríguez.

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Hilton unveils new brand, Spark by Hilton

Hilton announced the launch of **Spark by Hilton**, the newest addition to its portfolio of world-class brands. Following extensive research, the introduction of Spark by Hilton fills an open space in the industry by creating a new premium economy lodging option to meet the needs of even more guests and owners seeking value, quality and consistency.

Spark by Hilton provides a simple, reliable and comfortable stay for every guest, all at an accessible price. For developers, Spark by Hilton leverages an innovative conversion model to offer a compelling investment option for owners.

"Hilton has pioneered the hospitality industry as we know it today, and we continue to grow our portfolio as our guests' and owners' needs evolve. The debut of Spark by Hilton builds on that legacy of developing world-class brands as we work to serve any guest, for any trip occasion, anywhere in the world." says **Christopher J. Nassetta**, President and CEO, Hilton.

Spark by Hilton builds on Hilton's continued work evaluating the market to develop new brands to meet the evolving needs of guests and owners and provide a hotel for every traveler for every stay. Over the last 15 years, Hilton has more than doubled its

brand portfolio and number of rooms around the world organically, creating a diverse, yet complementary range of brands across categories.

Value and Consistency for Guests

Serving guests looking to maximize the value of their travel experience, Spark by Hilton will deliver reliable, friendly essentials with unexpected touches. Signature elements of Spark by Hilton will include:

- **Thoughtful Simplicity:** Spark by Hilton will offer simple, inspired design with splashes of color and cheer that bring the outdoors in. Each hotel will provide a welcoming sense of arrival

with colorful exterior statement walls and energizing artwork. The public space will feature multi-functional seating from communal tables to rocking chairs, offering plenty of options for guests to enjoy breakfast, socialize or work throughout the day. Guest rooms will be comfortable and relaxing so travelers can unwind and recharge for whatever comes next. Focusing on practical amenities, the simple, streamlined furniture will include an open closet, in-room refrigerator, multi-purpose work surface and bright bathroom.

- **Reliable Service:** As part of the Hilton family of brands, guests will feel welcome and confident in their stay from the moment they walk through the door. Warm and inviting hotel team members with attention to detail will provide happy and helpful service. And, guests will be empowered with the tools needed to make the most of their stay, such as 24-hour digital check-in and Digital Key.

- **Unexpected Touches:** Spark by Hilton will help add value to the guest experience by offering a simple, complimentary breakfast, featuring premium coffee, juice and a signature bagel bar with spreads, so guests can fuel up before hitting the road. The brand will also offer a 24-hour retail market for on-the-go travelers.

- **Consistent Quality:** To ensure the goal of a consistent, quality guest experience, each hotel will be required to complete a full renovation, encompassing all guest-facing areas of the hotel, prior to joining Spark by Hilton and the Hilton family.

*"In looking at the economy category, we saw a segment that has grown dramatically but lacks consistency, providing us an opportunity to deliver on the needs of this underserved segment of travelers," said **Matt Schuyler**, chief brand officer, Hilton. "True to its name, Spark by Hilton signifies the start of something great – a moment of ignition as we add energy and momentum into the category and deliver the most reliable and friendly stays. This breakthrough premium economy brand will deliver the essentials done exceptionally well for every guest, every time along with friendly service – ensuring all travelers can enjoy a great hotel experience where they feel truly cared for."*

Value for Owners

Hilton is creating greater value for owners and operators with the launch of Spark by Hilton. This cost-effective conversion brand provides a unique opportunity for existing properties by reimagining the economy segment and focusing on areas that drive the

guest experience while also providing a consistent look and feel across each hotel.

Owners also will benefit from Hilton's powerful network effect, resilient business model, and high-performing commercial engines, including supply chain management, a cost-effective pricing model and automated customer offerings such as digital check-in and Digital Key.

*"Spark by Hilton was developed in close collaboration with our developer community, and we are thrilled by the positive feedback and excitement we have received to date," said **Alissa Klees**, brand leader, Spark by Hilton. "In fact, we already have more than 100 deals in various stages of development across the U.S., with the first properties anticipated to open this year."*

Spark by Hilton guests will enjoy the benefits of Hilton Honors, Hilton's award-winning guest loyalty program for the company's portfolio of more than 7,000 hotels worldwide. Members who book directly with Hilton have access to instant benefits, including a flexible payment slider that allows members to choose nearly any combination of points and money to book a stay, exclusive member discounts, free standard Wi-Fi and the Hilton Honors mobile app.





Hyatt

announces the opening of FirstName Bordeaux

Hyatt Hotels Corporation announced the opening of **FirstName Bordeaux**, a lifestyle hotel joining the JdV by Hyatt collection of independent hotels. Demonstrating Hyatt's continued brand growth in Europe, FirstName Bordeaux embodies the JdV by Hyatt brand's inclusive spirit, feel-good outlook, and joy-driven approach to hotel experiences.

Located in the heart of the historic port city, FirstName Bordeaux is a true reflection of its neighborhood, encouraging guests to discover local delights at their own pace. Situated in an iconic building, the hotel is close to the Garonne River and moments away from cultural and notable landmarks such as the Quays of Bordeaux, the

Water Mirror, La Cité du Vin, and the Darwin Ecosystem. For those looking to immerse themselves in the region's most renowned attractions, the infamous Bordeaux vineyards and the extraordinarily beautiful Arcachon Bay are easily accessible by public transport or car.

FirstName Bordeaux epitomizes the "joie de vivre" philosophy of the JdV by Hyatt brand and participates in the World of Hyatt loyalty program giving members even more options to travel. As part of the JdV by Hyatt collection of independent properties, the hotel invites guests and locals alike to connect, live in the moment and celebrate the joy of life, whilst unwinding in spaces designed with distinctive personality. This, together

with FirstName's commitment to authenticity and inclusivity, ensures that each stay at FirstName Bordeaux will be a truly one-of-a-kind experience.

The hotel was designed by architect Nicolas Adnet from Studio MHNA, whose creative and personalized approach has inspired a unique interpretation of French elegance and local sophistication. The hotel's interiors create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, encouraging guests to embrace the spirit of their surroundings.

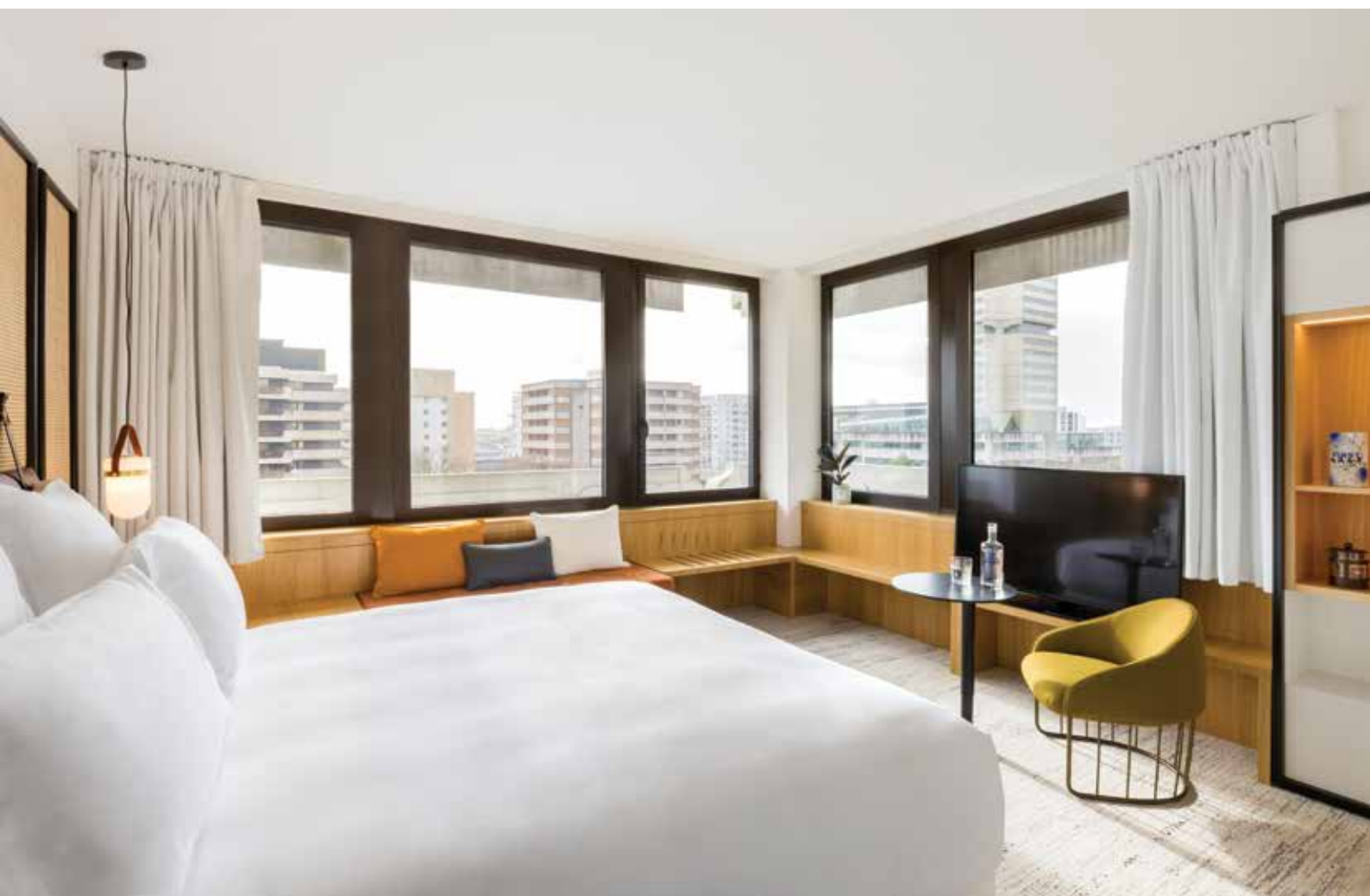
FirstName Bordeaux offers 147 guestrooms and suites, divided into seven distinct categories for guests to choose from: Cocoon, Canopée, Carat, Collector Suites, and FirstRoom. Designed to be both functional and comfortable, each guestroom is beautifully decorated with

graphic frescoes by a local artist and equipped with easy-to-use technology and intuitive finishes. The hotel's commitment to sustainability is realized in eco-friendly interiors, including wood sourced from eco-managed forests, plush carpets fashioned from discarded fishing nets, as well as charcoal in each room to purify the atmosphere.

The hotel's restaurant and bar, Le Bada, highlights Bordeaux's reputation as a world-renowned wine region and its revered provincial gastronomy. A supporter of "locavore" cuisine, consultant Chef Cédric Bechade has created a menu that is a passionate celebration of regional produce and advocates freshness and zero waste. Delicious plates are paired with a wine list that showcases the best vintages as well as a selection of up-and-coming wineries from Bordeaux,

providing a sophisticated ambience for guests to meet and connect in.

In the spirit of collaboration and celebration, FirstName Bordeaux offers three meeting spaces that have been designed to inspire guests and stimulate innovative ideas. Comfortable benches and seating areas create a casual, thought-provoking backdrop for reading, conversation, and meetings. In the evenings, the spaces transform, offering a unique location for social gatherings, parties and cocktails. For those looking to evoke a joyful spirit, Speakeasy, the hotel's secret bar can be found behind the door of a bordelaise cupboard and features unexpected furnishings designed to surprise and delight. A perfect place to book for a corporate event, a private party, or an after work gathering.





STR: Dubai hotel industry closed 2022 with healthy performance

Dubai's hotel occupancy came in lower than the pre-pandemic comparable, but average daily rate (ADR) once again pushed revenue per available room (RevPAR) far above 2019 levels, according to preliminary December 2022 data from **STR**.

- Occupancy: 76.6%
- Average daily rate (ADR): AED892.84
- Revenue per available room (RevPAR): AED684.03

The occupancy level was 2.0% below the 2019 comparable (78.2%),

while ADR and RevPAR were 33.8% and 31.1% higher, respectively. Occupancy was slightly ahead of 2019 in both October and November. ADR and RevPAR were well above pre-pandemic levels throughout the year.

December daily data shows Dubai's highest performance was recorded on New Year's Eve: occupancy (91.0%), ADR (AED1,765.51) and RevPAR (AED1,606.74). With the exception of four days during the month, daily occupancy levels remained above 70%.

Pride Hotels Group signs Pride Hotel Kanpur



Pride Hotels Group has announced the signing of “Pride Hotel Kanpur”. Centrally located the property will be easily accessible to all major leisure and commercial establishments in the city. The property will have well-appointed rooms, two large banquets, 4 meeting and conference rooms, a 24 Hours Coffee Shop, a rooftop open-sky restaurant and in-house laundry. The new property will be operational from November 2023.

Announcing the signing, **Atul Upadhyay, Senior Vice President, of Pride Hotels Group** said, “We are delighted to sign the Pride Hotel Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh largest city and epicentre of commercial and industrial establishments in the State. Tourist attractions in Kanpur give visitors the chance to see things that aren’t as glamorous as those in bigger cities. Kanpur receives frequent

business travellers and other working professionals due to its industrial environment. Leisure tourists visit Kanpur to learn about Indian history in the most ideal setting”.

“With the signing of “Pride Hotel Kanpur” in Uttar Pradesh, we are thrilled to further expand operations in North India. Once it is up and running, the new hotel will provide the best possible accommodations thanks to its excellent location, mouthwatering menu options, banqueting, and a variety of hospitality services”, said **Mohammed Shoeb, Associate Vice President, of North India.**

Pride Hotels Group has a presence in around 51 great locations with 5,075 rooms, 102 restaurants, 134 banquets, lawns, and conference halls. Currently, Pride Hotels Ltd operates and manages a chain of hotels under the brand name “Pride Plaza Hotel” an Indian Luxury Collection, “Pride

Hotel” which are conveniently centrally located business hotels, “Pride Resorts” at mesmerizing destinations, Mid-Market segment hotels for every business “Pride Biznotels” and a fresh concept of Premium luxury serviced apartment stays “Pride Suites”. Current locations are New Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Pune, Nagpur, Bangalore, Chennai, Goa, Jaipur, Indore, Udaipur, Bharatpur, Mussoorie, Puri, Gangtok, Anand, Alkapuri, Manjusar(Vadodara), Sasan Gir, Somnath, Bhopal and Haldwani. Upcoming locations are Daman, Bhavnagar, Surendranagar, Agra, Rishikesh, Dwaraka, Jabalpur, Bhopal, Bharuch, Haldwani, Nainital, Jim Corbett, Dehradun, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Lucknow, Varanasi, Rajkot, Kanpur, Neemrana, Mysore, Gurugram, Aurangabad, Halol, Yawatmal, Rudraprayag, Bengaluru, Ranakpur, Greater Noida, Digha among other. <https://www.pridehotel.com/>



Brij Hotels debut in Bikaner with Brij Gaj Kesri



The property marks Group's fourth launch in Rajasthan, and sixth in India

Brij Hotels, a curated collection of bespoke properties offering immersive stays at unmatched locations, announce the opening of the Brij Gaj Kesri in Bikaner. This is the group's fourth hotel in Rajasthan, and sixth across India.

Brij Gaj Kesri, Bikaner is a modern-day manor house that spans 16 acres. The property, set in red sandstone, plays testament to the legendary Marwari patronage of art and architecture, and

displays a curated collection of priceless artefacts and artworks throughout its expansive interiors.

The hotel design reflects a harmonious amalgamation of European and Rajasthani influences, marrying understated elegance with touches of royalty.

An oasis in the arid locales of Bikaner, Brij Gaj Kesri is surrounded by a pleasant green cover with gardens of Neem, Khejri, Peepul, Sheesham trees etc. that are a sanctuary for birds like Jungle Babblers, Bulbuls, Lapwings, Woodpeckers, and more. The property offers 40 spacious rooms, 'Polki' a vegetarian restaurant, multiple lounging areas with relaxed seating, a library, spa, outdoor pool, unique dining spaces and multiple venues to host social celebrations as well as MICE events with capacities ranging from 30 to 1500 guests at a time. It is ideal for destination weddings with the entire property takeover that will ensure each day of celebration is uniquely turned into the memory of a lifetime.

Commenting on the launch, **Udit Kumar, Co-founder, Brij Hotels**

said, 'We are excited to announce that Brij Gaj Kesri, Bikaner is now open, and we are welcoming guests at this new addition to our growing portfolio. Bikaner as a destination has a rich history and culture where guests can choose to indulge in varied immersive experiences. Acquainting them with the food, arts, culture and places of historic significance in this beautiful city. This unique property fills the space in the Brij Hotels for large events since we anticipate demand for MICE travel and year-round social events for 2023. Brij Gaj Kesri, offering so many venues and capacity options, is perfect to host these celebrations and events with great grandeur.'

Located on the edge of the Thar desert, Bikaner is a popular destination with travelers visiting Rajasthan. The royal city was founded by Rao Bika, the youngest son of Rao Jodha (founder of Jodhpur) in 1488. Today, Bikaner is the fourth largest city in the state offering an unmatched insight into the lifestyle of the royalties. Known for its sand dunes, forts and palaces. It is home to the famous spicy Bhujia and the

spice market. Bikaner has the famous camel farm and hosts an annual camel festival. The by lanes and bazaars of Bikaner are treasure troves of local art and craft like carpet weaving, miniature paintings and Carvings, and ornamental stonework.

Brij Hotels continue its vision of developing experiential hotels at unique destinations that offer responsible luxury while being sustainable. The Group offers a lineup of hyperlocal experiences at Brij Gaj Kesri. From authentic regional flavours served in a private setting under the stars to foodie discoveries in the city, from desert escapades to sundowners on the dunes. From exploring the local markets to dance, music and folklore, this destination will allure your senses. Brij Gaj Kesri brings alive the true essence of Bikaner for guests to take back with them.

Bikaner is well connected to all major cities of India through roads and railways. There is a daily flight to and from New Delhi. Key distances include Jaipur - 350 Kms; Jodhpur - 250 Kms, and Delhi - 500 Kms.





Accor introduces Handwritten Collection - a global portfolio of hotels curated with passion

The New Brand Launches With An Immediate Footprint Of 12 Committed Hotels Around The World; Properties Will Connect Guests With The Charm, Character, And Warmth Of Their Hoteliers

Handwritten
COLLECTION

Accor, a world leading hospitality group, today announced an exciting new addition to the Group's unparalleled network of brands: **Handwritten Collection**, a global portfolio of charming bespoke hotels that offer an intimate and stylish hospitality experience. Accor already has over 110 Handwritten leads globally totaling more than 11,500 rooms, including 12 secured signings,



with five properties expected to debut throughout the first trimester of 2023.

Handwritten Collection properties opening over the next several months include **Hotel Shanghai Sheshan Oriental**, Handwritten Collection in Shanghai, China; **Le Saint Gervais Hotel & Spa**, Handwritten Collection in Saint Gervais, France; **Wonil Hotel Perth**, Handwritten Collection in Perth, Australia; **Hotel Morris**, Handwritten Collection in Sydney, Australia; and **Le Splendid Hotel Lac d'Annecy**, Handwritten Collection in Annecy, France. Additional properties will open throughout the remainder of

the year and beyond, including **Hotel Les Capitouls Toulouse Centre**, France; **Oru Hub Hotel**, Handwritten Collection in Tallinn, Estonia; **Square Lodge Hotel La Roche sur Yon**, Handwritten Collection in La Roche-sur-Yon, France; **Sunrise Premium Resort**, Handwritten Collection in Hoi An, Vietnam; **Paris Montmartre Sacré Coeur***, Handwritten Collection in Paris, France as well as properties in Bucharest, Romania and Madrid, Spain. The Handwritten Collection portfolio is expected to reach more than 250 hotels by 2030.

"Handwritten Collection enriches Accor's offering in the 'collection brands' segment with a curated selection of hotels that exhibit charming and one-of-a-kind concepts. Our aim, beyond delivering a truly authentic guest experience, is to support the growing number of independent and boutique hotel owners looking to boost their global profile, connect with more audiences and grow their revenue without losing their identity," said **Alex Schellenberger, Chief Marketing Officer, Premium, Midscale, Economy Brands, Accor**. *"The hotels we will feature in Handwritten Collection are those sought out by travelers who appreciate heartwarming travel experiences and a twist on traditional hospitality, as well as by hoteliers who cherish the unique personality of their properties while desiring the benefits that come with a leading global partner."*

With the creation of Handwritten Collection, Accor is broadening its unrivalled brand portfolio and midscale hotel offerings and will look to replicate the success it has achieved with the Group's other collection brands across other segments. This includes the MGallery Hotel Collection, a storied portfolio in the upper upscale brand segment that now counts more than 100 boutique hotels worldwide and Emblems Collection, Accor's first luxury collection brand, a carefully curated selection of distinctive hotels that are emblematic of their destination, designer or place in history. With a similar bespoke approach, Handwritten Collection will bring together hotels

with individual personalities, intimately reflecting the character and warmth of the people who love and look after them. Like a handwritten note, each host's individual touches will be subtly encountered at select moments throughout the guest journey. From a warm welcome that cascades into conversation, to freshly baked treats that have guests sneaking seconds into their pockets, no two hotels or stays will be the same.

A Host with Passion

Handwritten Collection offers a variety of hotels that are so distinct, it's as if each local hotelier were inviting guests into their charming and stylish homes. The guest experience at Handwritten Collection brings to life the spirit of the host: their tastes, their passions and the little quirks of their personality. Each local hotelier provides a charming presence that weaves their character and personality into the fabric of their hotel, engaging guests with local wisdom and delightful conversation, bringing a personalized energy to the guest experience.

"The manner in which each host interacts with their guests is thoughtfully considered and brings to life their own personal passions," added **Caroline Bénard, Global SVP Economy & Midscale Brands, Accor**. *"Whether in a social setting or the privacy of a guest's room, there will be moments of storytelling and engagement that create a genuine connection. This rapport between host and guest contributes to a more meaningful and memorable stay experience."*

Designed for Independent Hoteliers

The Handwritten Collection is also designed with the needs of independent hotel owners in mind. With a current conversion rate of 80%, the bulk of properties joining Handwritten Collection will be conversion projects rather than new builds, requiring a simpler transition and ramp up process and a more sustainable growth and development model. The brand's



standards are designed to be flexible, light, and easy to attain. Moreover, Handwritten Collection provides direct ROI and the opportunity for owners to maximize revenue with immediate access to the power and reach of Accor's sales, distribution and loyalty platforms, while also benefiting from the Group's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) capabilities.

"In 2022, Accor signed on average globally more than one hotel per day and opened nearly one hotel per day. We aim to continue this growth by anticipating the needs of our guests and aligning with the investment criteria of our partners and owners. Independent hotels are increasingly seeking the strength of Accor's powerful sales, distribution and loyalty platform to increase their

revenue and assist them in optimizing their costs, whilst retaining their own distinctive personality and offering a highly qualitative product, service and experience. Handwritten Collection offers them an ideal solution, providing the option for a franchise contract and a flexible and cost-effective level of investment. We look forward to working collaboratively with owners and partners and welcoming additional hotels from around the world into this outstanding collection. With over 110 properties and 11,500 rooms in negotiation to become part of Handwritten Collection, including 12 hotels committed already, we aim to have over 250 properties by 2030." said **Camil Yazbeck, Global Chief Development Officer, Premium, Midscale, Economy, Accor.**

Handwritten Collection enriches Accor's offering in the 'collection brands' segment with a curated selection of hotels that exhibit charming and one-of-a-kind concepts.

As travel trends continue to evolve, so have the lodging options available to travellers. From hotels to short-term rentals, travellers have more choices than ever. For hoteliers, property managers, and tourism organizations trying to understand what's happening in their market and how they are performing against their competitive set, a full picture of accommodation bookings and air traffic is necessary to make accurate, data-driven revenue decisions.

With this in mind, **Amadeus**, a global leader in travel data intelligence and hospitality technology, and **Key Data**, a global leader in short-term rental data, have announced a partnership to combine forward-looking business intelligence data for air, hotels, vacation rentals, and other alternative accommodations. The blended data sets will fully integrate to produce a best-in-class, single view of travel data.

For the first time, this single view of data will also be available to Destination Marketing Organizations (DMOs) and Convention & Visitor

Bureaus (CVBs), ushering in a new, more comprehensive view of travel trends and insights with an easy-to-use set of dashboards and tools.

Jason Sprenkle, CEO, Key Data Dashboard, said, "Customers and businesses that rely on travel data need a single solution that offers a full view of their market, regardless of where travellers choose to stay. By partnering with Amadeus, we not only make it easier for our customers to access travel data, but we also unlock new insights and trends to help these businesses and destinations make decisions earlier, and

with more confidence."

Michael Yeomans, Executive Vice President, Business Intelligence and Data Solutions, Hospitality, Amadeus, commented, "We are very pleased to add this unique data to Amadeus' robust business intelligence suite. As the travel landscape continues to evolve, we are committed to offering the best breadth and depth of data and insights to our customers. We're excited about this new partnership which supports our offer expansion as the hospitality industry's most trusted travel data source."

Amadeus and Key Data announce business intelligence partnership





France set to be the most visited country in the world by 2025, says GlobalData

According to the latest report by GlobalData, 'Tourism Destination Market Insight: Western Europe', France held the title of most visited country in the world prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, welcoming 88.1 million visitors in 2019. However, it was overtaken by Spain in 2021.

France is set to cement itself as the most visited country in the world, according to **GlobalData**, which estimates that the country will attract 93.7 million international travellers by 2025. The leading data and

analytics company notes that this forecast will place the country ahead of its competitor, Spain, which overtook France in 2021.

According to the latest report by GlobalData, 'Tourism Destination Market Insight: Western Europe',

France held the title of the most visited country in the world prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, welcoming 88.1 million visitors in 2019. However, it was overtaken by Spain in 2021. Having attracted 66.6 million international visitors in 2022, France is now set to reclaim the title, with the number of international arrivals expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.1% between 2022 and 2025.

Hannah Free, Travel & Tourism Analyst at GlobalData, comments: "Alongside Italy and Spain, France represents a significant segment of the growth in Western Europe. The country is not only popular with travellers from Europe itself - especially the UK, Germany and Belgium - but it is also popular with visitors from further afield, including China and the United States. In fact, France is one of the top Western

European destinations for UStravellerss."

Spain received 26.3 million visitors in 2021, overtaking France to become the most visited Western European destination. By 2025, Spain is expected to attract 89.5 million international visitors (CAGR of 12.2% between 2022 and 2025).

Free continued: "Visitation to France and Spain will remain strong in the years to come, with festivals, culture and gastronomy being a big pull for tourists. Both countries have a lot to offer visitors, with their own unique cultures, cuisines, and atmospheres. Both countries are also relatively large, with a diverse and varied landscape, and each country has its own unique coastline."

One of France's big advantages is its transportation. Travel between major cities in both France and Spain is relatively easy, with high-speed trains connecting most major cities.

Free adds: "One key transportation project in Western Europe is the Ultra Rapid Train line, which is being planned by the European Commission to improve connectivity between Lisbon in Portugal and Helsinki in Finland. The program involves the construction of an 8,000km double-track high-speed railway network between Lisbon and Helsinki with a loop around the Baltic Sea. The rail line will pass through, Portugal, Spain, France, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, and Finland."



Millennials and Gen Z set to rescue tourism industry in 2023

QuMind research reveals that 42% of 18-34 year olds plan to spend more on travel and tourism next year despite heightened concerns over the cost of living crisis.

Research from the customer insights platform **QuMind** reveals that Millennials and Gen Z are set to rescue the tourism industry in 2023 as 42% plan to increase spending on travel and tourism in 2022, compared to just 22% of over 45-year-olds.

This is despite the fact that 18-34 years olds report that concerns over the cost of living crisis have influenced their decisions to travel more than the over 55s (66% vs 52%).

Commenting on the research, **Mark Ursell**, CEO of QuMind, said: "Many British consumers are making serious cutbacks to their holiday spending as a way to save money in these trying times. However, younger people that may feel like they missed out on travel experiences during COVID continue to increase their spending on travel, despite heightened concerns over the cost-of-living crisis."

"It is critical that travel and tourism

companies help their price-sensitive customers' money to stretch further. Offering deals and added incentives will be key to helping many people get away and have special and memorable experiences. However, there's not a one-size-fits-all approach, and travel companies need to understand what makes a holiday attractive to their different customer segments and offer targeted deals and communications to reach them," Mark continued.

Marketing holidays to Millennials and Gen Z

To make holidays more attractive to 18-34-year-olds, the research found that the top three travel offers this group are looking for are:

- Free cancellation (70%)
- Meals included (62%)
- Free hotel upgrade (58%)

The ways of marketing these deals to 18-34-year-olds differ significantly

from older generations. While email deals from airlines and hotels were the top source of travel marketing communications across all age brackets, social media adverts and influencer posts were much more influential for 18-24 years olds than for the 55+ (32% vs 4% and 19% vs 1%).

Another difficult year ahead for travel & tourism

Looking more broadly, the travel and tourism industry risks a difficult year as more than half of Brits cited increased travel prices, energy prices and the cost-of-living crisis as having a direct influence on holiday planning for 2023 (59%, 51% and 56% respectively).

Almost one-third of Britons (31%) identified the overall price as the most important factor when choosing a holiday. This reflects the reduction in spending already seen in 2022, where 42% of UK consumers reported spending less on travel and tourism compared to previous years, with 39% spending an average of £500 or less for their holidays over the year.

In 2023, overall spending is predicted to fall further. While 39% of Brits expect to maintain their overall spending, 33% anticipate cutting costs further. This group anticipates spending on average 42% less.

ACE CONNECT,



key market for us and to increase our footprints, seek clear direction and an understanding, we partnered with Ace Connect, given that they have strong connections and past credentials with the travel trade, along with deep insights of both the Indian and South African markets. We value our partnership and look forward to a strong collaboration to promote our products and services in India.” Commenting on the partnership, **Alpha Jani, Founder & CEO, of Ace Connect** said, “One of the key ingredients to the success of product and destination marketing is creating the right fit between what is being offered along with an understanding of the audience and market that it is being catered to. We are proud to be associated with Peermont Global and look forward to working together to achieve their mission of promoting Emperors Palace hotels, Casino, Entertainment and Conference facilities in India. Our expertise and in-depth knowledge of this market will add immense value to Peermont Hotels’ plans for India, enabling them to devise and implement a customised B2B sales, marketing, and business development strategy.

Ace Connect will be responsible and step in as an extended valued partner to Peermont hotels, rendering sales assistance and strategic business advice to aggressively promote the hotel chain across key markets in India.

India bags its first overseas B2B sales and business development mandate

Ties up with Peermont Global to promote Emperors Palace hotels, Casino, Entertainment and Conference facilities, Pan India. Ace Connect, a professional consulting company for niche products and destinations in the Travel and hospitality space has been appointed

by Peermont Global as its B2B sales, marketing, and business development partner in India. As part of the mandate, Ace Connect will be responsible for the development and implementation of an effective sales and marketing strategy aimed at educating the Trade fraternity, generating

awareness, and increasing sales volumes for the Emperors Palace Hotel Casino Convention Resort amongst its target audience in India.

On the engagement with Ace Connect, **Yugashnee Naicker-Group Manager-Sales, Peermont Hotels, Casinos, and Resorts** said, “India is a

Singapore reassures travellers from India and continues to welcome visitors to the popular holiday destination



Following India's recent announcement of mandatory negative RT-PCR tests for travellers from six countries, including Singapore, the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) would like to highlight that there is no change to Singapore's current COVID-19 protocol.

Fully-vaccinated travellers from India will continue to be able to enter Singapore with no quarantine and testing requirements under the Vaccinated Travel Framework (VTF) that came into effect on April 1, 2022.

The reassurance from STB comes after the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India announced on December 29, 2022, that it would require negative RT-PCR test reports from all travellers entering India from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Thailand from January 1, 2023. Passengers returning to India will be required to show a negative RT-PCR test, taken within 72 hours of their departure and uploaded onto the Air Suvidha portal.

Travellers from India to Singapore can continue enjoying their travels to Singapore with peace of mind, in light of the following key factors:

- No change to the border and on-ground restrictions - Fully vaccinated travellers arriving in Singapore from India can enter Singapore without quarantine or test requirements. Additionally, non-fully vaccinated travellers can also enter Singapore without any quarantine, as long as they possess a negative pre-departure RT-PCR or professionally administered ART test report. Singapore has not changed the status of any border or on-ground restrictions for visitors from India.
- Business as usual – All tourist offerings, from attractions and shopping malls to dining and nightlife establishments remain fully open.
- Accessible testing facilitates – Testing facilities are widely and easily accessible throughout Singapore, per the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India's

requirements. The full list of Quick Testing Centres across the island, including booking details, can be found at Singapore Government's Gowhere Test Centres website. Public health and the safety of visitors have always been top priorities for Singapore, and the country is closely monitoring global developments with COVID-19.

Reassuring travellers and travel trade partners in India, GB Srithar, Regional Director, India, Middle East, South Asia, and Africa, said: "Our message during this time is clear: Singapore remains as open as before and continues to welcome all visitors from India. On the testing end, our testing facilities are widely and easily available across the country, with the highest level of efficient, fuss-free services. We, therefore, invite travellers from India young and old to continue enjoying Singapore's vibrant, reimagined destination experiences, through the festive season and into 2023."

Visitors can find the most up-to-date information on Singapore's COVID-19 measures at the Singapore Immigration & Checkpoints Authority's SafeTravel Portal.

Singapore's tourism landscape has evolved over the years, making the destination one of the most popular and vibrant lifestyle destinations across the globe. The year-to-date number of inbound tourists to Singapore stood at 5.37 million visitor arrivals at the end of November.

With iconic attractions across the island, an action-packed calendar of lifestyle events in 2023, and a dynamic dining and nightlife scene, Singapore continues to draw travellers from all over the world to revel in its many offerings.

Ras Al Khaimah

records its highest visitor numbers in 2022

Ras Al Khaimah welcomed over 1.13M visitors in 2022. Results exceed 2019 pre-pandemic levels, with the highest-ever number of annual arrivals to the Nature Emirate and a 15.6% increase on 2021.



RAKTDA) has announced its highest-ever annual visitor numbers, with the Emirate welcoming over 1.13M overnight arrivals in 2022, a total increase of 15.6% vs 2021. The results exceed pre-pandemic levels indicating recovery and resilience in a volatile year. Geopolitical and economic challenges, Ras Al Khaimah has become one of the fastest destinations to bounce back. In addition to its record visitor numbers, key 2022 achievements include:

- **Launched Balanced Tourism** – its roadmap to becoming the regional leader in sustainable tourism by 2025
- **Announced the largest foreign**

direct tourism investment project in partnership with Wynn Resorts, Marjan and RAK Hospitality Holding

- **Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG), Mövenpick and Radisson brands** entered the destination for the first time, marking a 17% annual growth in hotel supply to over 8,000 keys

- **5,867 keys scheduled to be added over the next few years, a 70% increase on the current inventory** – among the highest growth rates in the UAE

- **40% increase in international visitors driven by 90+ roadshows, trade fairs, workshops and media events across 24 markets**

- **Recognition in Time magazine as one of the World's Greatest Places of 2022** and CNN Travel's best destinations to visit in 2023

- **Opened new attractions, including Jais Sledder**, which has seen more than 100,000 visitors since its February opening, and the longest-developed hiking trails in the Emirate

- **Achieved a visitor satisfaction score (NPS) of over 80%** – far above the industry average of 51

- **Hosted over 50 events including the prestigious Global Citizen Forum**, the 15th edition of the Ras Al Khaimah Half Marathon, Arab Aviation Summit, and DP World Tour and secured the 2023 Minifootball (WMF) World Cup for the first time in the UAE

- **Two Guinness World Record titles at the New Year's Eve fireworks and drone display**

- **Authority named one of the Top 10 Great Places to Work in the Middle East 2022**

Commenting on the Emirate's strong tourism performance in 2022, **Raki Phillips, CEO of Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority**, said: *"It has been quite a year. From January's announcement of the multibillion-dollar integrated Wynn resort – a project that will usher in a new era of economic development through tourism – to securing two Guinness World Record titles for our New Year's*

Eve fireworks and drone display, we have shown just how dynamic we are as a destination. Our success has been led by our agility and responsiveness – and the fact we think like a community, shaping our experiences to appeal to visitors and residents. With a determined focus on diversification, accessibility and sustainability, we are on track for even bigger things in 2023."

Strong December performance

The impressive full-year figures follow a strong December performance in which the Emirate welcomed its highest-ever footfall in one month, with over 128,000 visitor arrivals, representing a 23% increase vs. December 2021. This was bolstered by the Emirate's record-breaking New Year's Eve fireworks and drones display, which saw Ras Al Khaimah set two GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™ titles for the 'largest number of operated multi-rotors/drones with a simultaneous fireworks display' and the 'largest aerial sentence formed by multi-rotors/drones. The festivities drew over 30,000 visitors with public events and hotels across the Emirate fully booked, making it the most visited show to date.

Sustainable agenda for 2023 and beyond

Under its bold new approach to sustainability – Balanced Tourism, the Emirate will become the regional leader in sustainable tourism by 2025, placing all aspects of sustainability at the centre of its investment, from environment and culture to conservation and liveability.

As part of this, the tourism authority aims to award more than 20 businesses with tourism certifications in the first year with the ultimate goal of obtaining the internationally recognised "Sustainable Tourism Destination" certificate for Ras Al Khaimah in 2023.

Promoting employee well-being, the tourism authority was named one of the Top 10 Great Places to Work in the Middle East 2022 – the highest placed government entity – as well as one of





the Best Workplaces for Women and a Great Place to Work in 2021, the first and only organization in Ras Al Khaimah to be awarded this certification. The Authority has also introduced RAKFAM, a series of initiatives aimed at enriching connectivity, community life and facilities for tourism sector employees in the Emirate.

Driving international tourism

2022 also saw a 40% increase in international visitors, with key source markets including Kazakhstan, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany and the Czech Republic. This was driven by a series of partnerships with

airlines and leading tour operators to target emerging and growing source markets, supported by 90+ events and roadshows in 24 markets worldwide. In a further boost for the Emirate's accessibility, Ras Al Khaimah also received three luxury cruises in 2022, welcoming over 2,500 passengers and crew. With a focus on developing its burgeoning cruise sector, the Emirate aims to attract 50 cruise ship calls each season, and over 10,000 passengers within the next few years.

Boosting the tourism and hospitality offering

New hotels and resorts opened

in 2022, increasing the Emirate's inventory by 17% to reach over 8,000 keys. The Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG), Mövenpick and Radisson brands entered the destination for the first time with the opening of the InterContinental Mina Al Arab, Mövenpick Resort Al Marjan Island and the Radisson Resort Ras Al Khaimah Marjan Island.

With 19 upcoming properties, including global brands like Marriott, Millennium, Anantara and Sofitel, and 5,867 keys in the pipeline over the next few years, a 70% increase versus current inventory and one of the highest development rates in the UAE, Ras Al



Khaimah's tourism vision continues to gain momentum. A major addition will be the multibillion-dollar integrated resort development with Wynn Resorts in 2026, announced early last year. The multipurpose integrated resort marks the largest-of-its-kind foreign direct investment in Ras Al Khaimah and will include 1,000+ rooms, shopping, meeting and convention facilities, spa, more than 10 restaurants and lounges, extensive entertainment choices, and a gaming area.

Another key feat for last year was Ras Al Khaimah's inclusion in Time magazine's World's Greatest Places of 2022 – a highly coveted list of 50 must-visit global destinations – in recognition of its adventure offerings and stunning, unique topography and geodiversity. To further bolster the Emirate's nature positioning and attract both international and domestic visitors, the Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority also announced the opening of key new sustainable attractions, including the Jais Sledder, the region's longest toboggan ride,

which has welcomed over 100,000 visitors since opening in February.

Growing Ras Al Khaimah's position as a world-class events hub

The Emirate's position as a leading sporting destination went from strength to strength, with over 50 events hosted. Highlights included the 15th RAK Half Marathon, the 23rd Annual Gumball 3000 rally, the first-ever Middle East route for the world-renowned supercar rally, the UAE Tour Cycling and the DP World Tour golf championship. Ras Al Khaimah also won the competitive bid to host the 2023 Minifootball World Cup, beating Budapest and Manila to add the mega international football competition to its growing roster.

Additionally, the Emirate hosted numerous events and conferences, including the Arab Aviation Summit for the second consecutive year and the first Pacific Asia Travel Association Annual Summit in the Middle East. It also secured a three-year partnership with the Global Citizen Forum to host its prestigious annual summit.







istanbul's Grand Bazaar hosts almost 40 million visitors in 2022

The **Grand Bazaar**, İstanbul's historical shopping and trade centre, was visited by **39,766,801 people** in 2022, following its restoration. This magnificent structure with a labyrinthine interior features thousands of shops selling all kinds of products from textiles to antiques and has been a destination of shopping for centuries. The Grand Bazaar, a covered complex that resembles a small city with a daily circulation of thousands of employees and shoppers, started welcoming visitors to its renewed structure after the restoration last year. The number of visitors to the Grand Bazaar rose by almost 56% from 25.5 million in 2021, to approximately 40 million in 2022 out of which 2 Lakhs visitors were Indian travellers. With this figure, an average of 100,000 people per day visited the Grand Bazaar last year.

İstanbul's history and shopping route

Located between Nuruosmaniye, Mercan and Beyazıt in İstanbul, the history of the Grand Bazaar dates to the middle of the 15th century. Within the scope of the Ottoman-era foundation system that covered almost all socio-economic and cultural life, structures such as bazaars were built near religious and other social and charitable sites to meet such needs such as maintenance and repair costs. The foundation of the Grand Bazaar, one of the most important landmarks in İstanbul, was laid in 1461 with the structures erected by Fatih Sultan Mehmet to bring income to Hagia Sophia. The Grand Bazaar, which became the region's most important trade centre over time, has started to serve as an important financial centre where jewels and precious metals from all over the

world are traded.

Defined not only as the oldest but as the largest shopping centre in the world, the Grand Bazaar has undergone several renovations by famous architects, including Sarkis Balyan, after various fires and earthquakes. Historically and culturally important, the Grand Bazaar – *Kapalıçarşı* in Turkish – has a prominent place in literature, travelogues and art, and continues to draw attention as one of the most visited historical bazaars in the world.

Remember, the first rule of shopping in the Grand Bazaar is 'to bargain!'

In the historical Grand Bazaar, which now hosts around 2,500 workplaces with additions made over a 500-year historical process, one can find countless products – from carpets to bags, from textile products to gold and silver jewellery, and from antiques to tiles. In the section called *han* (inn), where artisans specializing in the crafts of the Bazaar are located, there are around 1,200 workplaces. The Grand Bazaar is open between 08.30-19.30 in the summer and 08.30-19.00 in the winter.

A visit to the Grand Bazaar offers a chance to breathe the historical air of İstanbul and to observe its economic dynamics, in other words, to experience all of İstanbul through a bazaar. A search for the perfect item is likely to result in a fascinating stroll through the winding streets and passages of the Grand Bazaar, coming across numerous cafes and restaurants as well as enchanting shops.

During your visit to the Grand Bazaar, never forget the golden rule of shopping in the Bazaar: "Bargain with every purchase"!

Architectural landmarks in Copenhagen

*Take a look at
the following ten
iconic Copenhagen
buildings and
discover how playful,
light-filled, healthy
and people-focused
architecture can be in
Copenhagen.*





The Royal Danish Library - The Black Diamond

Designed by Copenhagen firm Schmidt Hammer Lassen, the extension to the 1906 **Royal Library** was finished in 1999 and is nicknamed 'The Black Diamond' for its dark, shiny, faceted shape that reflects the sea and sky from the waterfront. The

idea of juxtaposing this ultra-modern block with the older red-brick building is deliberately radical: it marks the transition from a traditional library to a future-focused cultural centre.

The National Gallery of Denmark - SMK

Denmark's largest art museum **SMK**

is another marriage of old and new, and an attraction in itself, located in central Copenhagen. The modernist extension by C.F. Møller in 1998 added much more than extra exhibition space to the gallery, as it opened up the building to the surrounding parkland, playing with the grandeur of the original 1896 building and the idea of making the





former royal collection accessible to the wider public. It also draws in light to the whole building.

Ordrupgaard Museum

Ordrupgaard Museum houses French Impressionist art and Danish art from the Golden Age in the lush area north of central Copenhagen. It takes an elegant 19th-century mansion by Danish architect Gotfred Tvede and furniture architect Finn Juhl's home next door as its starting point and has added two modernist wings, one by Zaha Hadid in 2005 and another by Norwegian architects Snøhetta in 2021. Hadid's wing is nicknamed 'the beached whale' for its organic concrete shape and was the architect's first

building in Northern Europe; Snøhetta's wing houses French Impressionist paintings and absorbs and reflects the changing light outside, echoing the world of the paintings it displays.

Grundtvig's Church

Grundtvig's Church is a gothic cathedral in Bispebjerg, north Copenhagen, was created in commemoration of the great Danish priest, poet, and reformer N.F.S. Grundtvig (1783-1882). Architect and designer Kaare Klint (1888-1954) completed the building in 1940 after his father, the original architect, died. He also designed the chairs, which have become a Danish design classic. The impressive building exudes a

special sense of calm and is made from handmade yellow bricks from Zealand, using restraint, natural light and clean lines throughout.

Mærsk Tower

The University of Copenhagen's **award-winning tower houses** parts of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences and is future-focused, using sustainable solutions all the way to the top of its 75-metre tower in Nørrebro. Designed by C.F. **Møller has** won several prizes for its innovative and sustainable design, which include rainwater recycling and energy-efficient laboratories.

The Royal Danish Opera House

Danish architect Henning Larsen



designed the **Opera House**, a bold and dramatic building on Copenhagen's harbourfront and one of the city's largest buildings. A number of Danish artists have contributed to the decor, among them Per Kirkeby who has created four bronze reliefs, and Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson who has contributed the three light sculptures for the foyer. In 2023, Cobe's Opera Park will open, a prominent public park designed with inspiration from the European capital's historical gardens with winding paths and pavilions.

CopenHill

CopenHill, an artificial ski slope and recreational hiking area built on top of the new waste management centre





in Refshaleøen, opened in 2019. It's a great example of architect Bjarke Ingels Group's definition of 'hedonistic sustainability' – its philosophy that sustainability should also be fun. Combined, the playful design and the ski slope on top represents a new way to think about urban resource handling and build waste-to-energy plants that are welcomed by city inhabitants.

The Silo

This former grain **silo** in the post-industrial harbour area of Nordhavn was transformed into a dramatic steel tower by COBE in 2017 with an angular faceted exterior of galvanised steel lending a raw and edgy appeal. The avant-garde building houses residential apartments and a stunning restaurant serving up fine dining and views as

far as Sweden from the 17th floor. Inside, it retains a post-industrial feel with exposed concrete walls, further celebrating the idea of transforming industrial trash into modern-day treasure.

M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark

The challenge was to create a **maritime museum** in Helsingør, north of Copenhagen, that did not disturb the view of the town's UNESCO-listed castle. Bjarke Ingels Group's solution was this: an underground museum in the shape of a ship built in the town's former dry dock. It's a staggering tour de force telling stories about shipping and seafaring in Denmark using an innovative form that celebrates the history and scale of shipbuilding itself.

Amalienborg Palace

Home to Denmark's royal family, as well as a museum about the monarchy, **Amalienborg** comprises four Rococo palaces set on a square in the heart of the city. Known as one of the best examples of Rococo architecture in Europe, it was designed by state architect Nicolai Eigtved in the 1750s and is a major classical work in Danish architecture built during the reign of King Frederik V. Eigtved also designed the adjacent Marble Church, a grand copper-domed church a street away as well as the **Frederikstaden** district Frederiks Hospital, nowadays home to the just-renovated Designmuseum Denmark. The architect played an important role in the establishment of the Royal Danish Academy.



Helsinki's growing reputation as a world-class food city



Helsinki has a lively and high-quality food culture that is still not fully recognised internationally. The goal of the City of Helsinki's new food strategy is to highlight the Finnish capital's unique food offerings and promote Helsinki as a world-class food city. Food will also be a central theme at the Matka Nordic Travel Fair on 20-22 January 2023. Helsinki's food story will also be shared to the world by the restaurant Finnjäväl's pop-up at COMO The Halkin Hotel in London from 21 March to 1 April 2023.

For many people, the first things that come to mind when asked about Helsinki are its northern location, the happiest people in the world, and functional design. The Finnish capital's high-quality and unique food culture, on the other hand, has remained a well-kept secret and often pleasantly surprises visitors



to the city. In Helsinki, one can find numerous innovative restaurants, the oldest market halls in the Nordic region, the Teurastamo centre of urban and culinary culture, distilleries, microbreweries and other craft companies, such as bakeries and chocolate producers.

"The strengths of Helsinki's food culture are its versatility, personality and a certain kind of uniqueness that combines local flavours and cultural influences from both East and West with a bold and innovative approach. The level of Helsinki's top restaurants is illustrated by the fact that one restaurant has been awarded two Michelin stars and five with one Michelin star," says **Nina Vesterinen**, Tourism Director at the City of Helsinki.

Helsinki wants to focus even more strongly on food tourism

Helsinki is currently implementing its Helsinki Tourism and Events Programme 2022–2026. The programme highlights the city's vibrant

urban culture with its events, visitors and restaurants as a key strategic priority for promoting the city's vitality and wellbeing. Internationally, food has become an important appeal factor for tourism in recent years.

Restaurants play a key role in the vitality of cities. The restaurants in Helsinki have enormous and partly untapped potential, which can be used together with partners to develop the city as an attractive destination providing wonderful experiences for visitors. Helsinki will highlight the best aspects of the city as a food travel destination at the *Matka Nordic Travel Fair* on 20–22 January 2023 by setting up Helsinki Food Court in cooperation with Food Camp Finland and Messukeskus.

The *Matka Nordic Travel Fair* in Helsinki is the largest tourism industry event in Northern Europe. In connection with the travel fair, Helsinki will also launch its own food culture strategy work. The aim is to make Helsinki a

world-class food city of interest.

Finnjälvi brings traditional Finnish dishes into the 20th century and to London

One of the advocates of Helsinki's developing restaurant and food culture is **Timo Linnamäki**, restaurateur and Chairman of the Board of Muru Dining, which operates several restaurants in Helsinki. Representing Muru Group at the travel fair will be the restaurant *Pastis*, which focuses on rustic French cuisine and a casual atmosphere, as well as attentive and individual service.

"So much is happening in Helsinki's restaurant scene at the moment, the range of offerings continues to expand, and there are real gems offering unique experiences throughout the city. Muru Group's restaurants are a good example of their versatility – our taste worlds vary from the French cuisine at *Pastis* and the fish and seafood dishes at *Sue Ellen* to the Italian cuisine at *Fiasco* and the pure Finnish flavours at *Finnjälvi*."

Some of Spain's regions where you can enjoy Michelin-starred restaurants

Even if you only plan to visit Spain for a few days, its gastronomy could tempt you to stay forever. Spain has a wide variety of climates, landscapes and environments perfect for the cultivation of local products of the highest quality. This has enabled the Michelin Guide to award three stars to lots of restaurants in Spain that take advantage of their region's produce to offer delicious dishes. Read on to find out where to enjoy haute cuisine in Spain.

Spanish gastronomy, infinite reasons to eat well

Spanish cuisine is famous the world over because it is flavoursome, healthy, traditional, creative and varied, and also because of its popular restaurants and fine dining, as demonstrated by the international recognition of its chefs. An example of how healthy it is can be seen in its famed Mediterranean diet. Star ingredients include olive oil, Iberian ham – a





source of national pride— and Spanish wine, the perfect accompaniment for toasting. Rioja produces the most famous Spanish wine, but you will discover other options throughout your journey around Spain.

Andalusia

Cadiz is the place to head for if you want to try gastronomy with three Michelin stars in Andalusia. The famous Puerto de Santa María is home to Aponiente, a restaurant offering seafood delicacies from the south of Spain. Chef Ángel León demonstrates that the coast of Cadiz offers much more than just fish, featuring some of the very special local ingredients from the beaches, lagoons, marshlands and estuaries of the unique Bay of Cadiz, such as plankton, seaweed and sea hare roe. Why not visit and enjoy an unforgettable gastronomic experience?

Cantabria

Cantabria is another important destination for Spanish haute cuisine thanks to the Cenador de Amós





restaurant in Villaverde de Pontones, which has also been awarded three Michelin stars. This area is near the Cantabrian coast with beautiful landscapes of lush meadows and extensive forests. This unique environment and the mild Atlantic climate offer chef Jesús Sánchez delicious products of the highest quality from Cantabrian gastronomy, such as Santoña anchovies and Liébana cheese.

Catalonia

Catalonia has a diverse range of landscapes that have blessed it with an abundant variety of local products, including cured meat and sausages, cheeses, wines, cava, meat, fish and vegetables. These top-quality ingredients change depending on the time of year, becoming seasonal



jewels due to the wonderful Mediterranean climate. Restaurants such as Lasarte, Cocina Hermanos Torres and ABaC in Barcelona, and El Celler de Can Roca in Girona explore these Catalan delicacies in dishes that have earned them three Michelin stars.

Autonomous Region of Valencia

If you haven't been to Denia yet, Quique Dacosta's three-Michelin-star restaurant will make you want to go. This famous chef makes the most of Valencia's gastronomy, which is enriched by the cultivation of products such as olive oil, tiger nuts and citrus fruits. And we can't forget the rice fields that abound in the Albufera nature reserve, a unique setting with ideal wetlands for harvesting Valencia's delicious rice.

Basque Country

The Basque Country has the most restaurants with three Michelin stars

of any Spanish region: Akelarre, Martín Berasategui and Arzak in San Sebastian, and Azurmendi in Bilbao. Therefore, Basque gastronomy is obviously reason enough to visit the north of Spain. Bathed by the Cantabrian sea, this region boasts a wide variety of local seafood and fish to delight all tastes. And the wet climate of its mountains is perfect for rearing high quality livestock. The interior of the region is mild, fostering the cultivation of vegetables and pulses, such as the famous Gernika peppers and Tolosa beans. Spain's most famous chefs see the Basque Country as ideal for offering varied and delicious local products.

Comunidad de Madrid

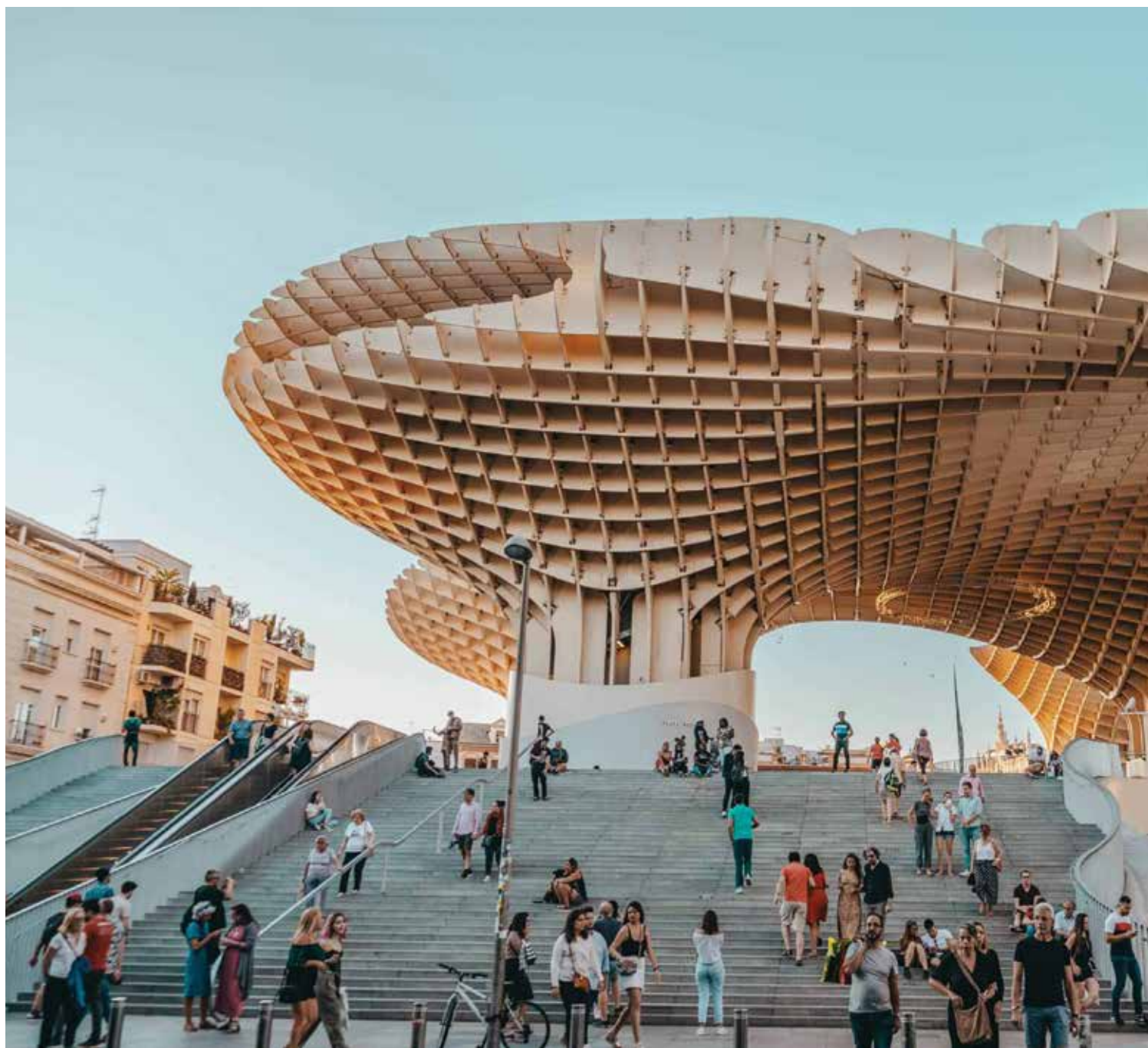
And can't leave Madrid off this list - it is home to one of the most famous restaurants in the country. Chef Dabiz Muñoz of DiverXO has been recognised as the Best Chef in the

World at The Best Chef Awards on two consecutive occasions. The unique dining experience at this restaurant offers diners "a journey through the hedonistic, greedy and creative cuisine" of its chef, with avant-garde cuisine being the order of the day.

Extremadura

This is the latest area in Spain to have restaurants with three Michelin stars. The old town of the World Heritage city of Cáceres is home to Atrio, by chef Toño Pérez and sommelier José Polo, where everything revolves around hospitality, Extremaduran products and its magnificent wine cellar. The stellar products of this region include Iberian ham, torta del Casar, La Serena and Ibores cheeses, and olive oil.

These are just some of the regions of Spain that offer the best ingredients for restaurants recognised with Michelin stars.



Seville

An inspiring Destination

Seville is a city that leaves its mark, and many people define it as special. It might be because of the grandeur of its monuments. Or perhaps the charm of areas such as Triana. It may be the scent of jasmine in its squares or the Spanish guitar music of its streets. Some say that it's the tradition of its festivals, and many are convinced its tapas are the real reason.



A monumental city

You can see it for yourself in the few meters that separate the Giralda tower, the Cathedral, and the Real Alcázar of Seville. La Giralda is a city icon and one of its main charms lies in its viewpoint. The views of Seville are fantastic with its courtyards of orange trees, typical in Andalusia, and a close-up of the largest Gothic temple in Europe, the Cathedral. A visit to the Real Alcázar reveals an extraordinary palace full of details. If



you visit in the summer, take advantage of the night visits and the festival held in its gardens. Seville is much more than its undeniable monumentality. It is a city of lively streets and large open spaces such as the huge Plaza de España, María Luisa Park, and the avant-garde Setas de Sevilla. And if you want to enjoy the authentic atmosphere of Seville, try going for tapas in the old town, in popular areas such as Alameda, Macarena, Nervión, Los Remedios, or Triana. Marinated 'pescaíto' (fish), small filled rolls, typical snails, fino (white wine), manzanilla (sweet wine), or a cold beer are a must on any tapas outing.

The popular tradition of the south

In Seville, tradition is always in fashion. From flamenco shows and Spanish guitar music to typical ceramics and crafts, which are always good souvenirs of the city. There are plenty of shops and workshops

in Triana. And it's easy to enjoy flamenco at one of the many 'tablaos' or neighbourhood 'peña' groups. Seville hosts what is perhaps the most important international festival of this art: The Biennial. The tradition of Seville is also reflected in its more international festivals. Two good examples are the April Fair and Holy Week. The first is all about joy and passion for popular Andalusian art, an unbeatable chance to enjoy the sound of the Spanish guitar, flamenco fashion, and festive Seville. Holy Week is a passionate festival full of emotional moments. To understand it, the best option is to witness one of the much-visited religious processions or hear a live 'saeta' (emotional flamenco song dedicated to the religious figures).

WHAT TO VISIT

Seville Town Hall - Art and culture

It contains several works of great historic and artistic interest, including

the town's pennant and a painting of the patron saints, Justa and Rufina. Diego de Riaño began work on the building in the 15th century. He designed the Town Hall's southern section, the small arch that joins the building to the Franciscan monastery, and two storeys adorned with Plateresque reliefs depicting historic and mythical figures, heraldic motifs, and emblems related to the founders of the city, Hercules and Caesar. The building was reformed in the 19th century by Demetrio de los Ríos and Balbino Marrón, who designed a new main façade in the Neoclassical style that gives onto the New Square.

Santa Cruz Neighbourhood - Smell of orange blossom.

The district of Santa Cruz covers the historic and artistic quarter of Seville. Walking through its streets you can see 12th-century buildings, like the Royal Citadels, and symbolic buildings,





like the cathedral, the General Archive of the Indies, the Hospital of the Venerable, and the City Hall. Among the narrow streets that cross the district like rivers, you will also find Sagrario and Santa Cruz parish churches and the Chapel of Santa María de Jesús. Two convents on the route are also outstanding, that of San José del Carmen and that of La Encarnación. All this is accompanied by the typical colour of the wall plinths and the smell of orange blossoms in the Seville streets, making this walk one not to be missed for visitors to Seville.

Casa de Pilatos House

Construction began at the end of

the 15th century and is the Andalusian palace prototype. It is of "Morisco" (Moorish-Christian) origin, although it also has Gothic and Plateresque elements. The entrance is Renaissance, with a Gothic roof crest. The main patio has Mudejar and Plateresque decorations. The Descanso de los Jueces (Judges' Rest) Room has a beautiful arch covered in Mudejar and Gothic elements, an attractive tiled plinth, and a plaster frieze.

India's archive

The Indies Archive which used to be the Mercaderes Market was built in 1572. Designed by Juan de Herrera and built by Alonso de Vandelviva and Juan

de Minjares. During the 17th century, the second floor and the cross of the Oath were constructed. A century later Carlos (Charles) III chose the building as the site for the Indies Archive. There were consequent modifications made to the building including the rebuilding of the main staircase. A building with a square floor plan with a large central patio. Inside valuable documents are kept that recreate the history of the relationship of Spain with the overseas American colonies.

María Luisa park

Seville's great urban park was designed by the French landscape gardener Forestier for the Ibero-



American Exhibition in 1929. With it, a purely Spanish style of gardening, which would be called Neo-Sevillian or Neo-Arab was reborn, which would have a great influence on all Spanish public parks of the first third of the century. A large part of its squares, circuses and monuments are dedicated to national literary figures, like the Bécquer, Cervantes, Hermanos Machado circuses, etc. and undoubtedly one of its characteristics is the widespread use of fountains, ponds, and furniture made from brick and ceramic tiles.

Casa Murillo

The Baroque painter Bartolomé Esteban Murillo spent the last years of his career in this Seville mansion, which is 2017, the 'Year of Murillo', and was converted to a fully-equipped centre for the interpretation and dissemination of his legacy. It was designed to make the life and work of Murillo, considered a forerunner of modern painting, accessible to all. Thus, Casa Murillo includes a space to welcome visitors, a screening room, different galleries with copies of iconic paintings by the 17th-century master, and a space for children. The centre organises family workshops, courses, concerts, and other educational activities. Located in the heart of the Santa Cruz neighbourhood, the building was refurbished to maintain the 17th-century style, with a well in the middle

of a central courtyard surrounded by arcades of semicircular arches on columns.

Seville Cathedral

The cathedral stands on the site of what was –in the 12th century– the Great Mosque. Today, the only part which remains of this structure is the minaret, also known as the Giralda due to the weather vane added to the top in the 16th century. The Abluciones courtyard and today's Puerta del Perdón door are also parts of the old mosque. It was converted into a Christian church when the city was conquered by Ferdinand III of Castile in 1248. Several stages of the building can be seen, with examples of the Mudéjar, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque and Neoclassical styles. Access to the cathedral is through the Plaza Virgen de los Reyes square. It has five naves (the main nave has a height of 36 meters) and a rectangular floor plan, measuring 116 meters long and 76 meters wide. The transept rises to a maximum height of 40 meters. The main altarpiece was built over a series of different periods and includes pieces by the brothers Jorge Fernández Alemán and Alejo Fernández, Roque Balduque, Pedro Millán, Juan Bautista Vázquez the Elder, and Pedro de Heredia. The Renaissance-style chapter room dates from the second half of the 16th century. The main

sacristy is Plateresque. The remains of Christopher Columbus lie in the cathedral.

Setas de Sevilla

Known as "Las setas" ("The Mushrooms"), it is the largest wooden structure in the world. Opened in 2011, the work of German architect Jürgen Mayer is 26 meters high. The structure is made up of six large parasols in the shape of mushrooms, and it affords fantastic views of Seville from the walkway/viewing point. There is also a restaurant. The Antiquarium is situated in the basement and contains important Roman archaeological remains. The area in which it is built includes a market and a raised square where different kinds of events take place.

La Giralda tower - The old minaret of the Arab mosque.

The bell tower, the diminishing niches, and the El Giralddillo weather vane were added in the 16th century. The part decorated with bricks is the work of the architect Alí de Gómara. A series of ramps takes visitors up to the bell tower, which offers outstanding views over the city. The Orange Tree Courtyard, in the Almohad style with a Visigoth pool, is to one side.

Plaza de España Square - Cultural meeting place.

Painted ceramic benches representing all the provinces in Spain are arranged around the square.

It was built because of the Ibero-american Exhibition of 1929, held in Seville. Its creator was Aníbal González. He mixed a style inspired by the Renaissance with typical elements from the city: exposed brick, ceramics, and wrought iron (worked by Domingo Prida). Its floor plan is semicircular. It is dominated by 2 towers, one on each side of the enclosed area, which frame the central building where the main rooms are. Between the two towers runs a network of galleries with an arcade of semicircular arches leading to exits in different parts of the square, where a fountain stands.

Copenhagen is the UNESCO-UIA World Capital of Architecture in 2023



Copenhagen manages a one-year programme with a focus on the future of architecture. Discover the city's unique approach to citizen-centric urban design during UNESCO-UIA World Capital of Architecture Copenhagen 2023.

Long known as a pioneer in citizen-centric urban design and sustainability, Copenhagen will be the **UNESCO-UIA World Capital of Architecture in 2023**. Chosen in recognition of its strong legacy within architecture and innovative urban development, along with its high ambitions on climate, sustainability, and liveability, Copenhagen is only the second city in the world to hold this triennially awarded title, following Rio de Janeiro in 2020. The city will use the opportunity to showcase its architecture, sustainable developments, and city planning solutions, engaging the public with events and experiences

in a year-long programme managed by the City of Copenhagen.

Throughout 2023, the city will become a global forum for discussion about architecture and urban planning. It will focus on urban solutions that benefit future generations as it hosts the **UIA (International Association of Architects) Congress** at Bella Center Copenhagen on 2-6 July 2023. This event brings together some 10,000 key urban planners and architects in discussions around future-focused architecture, sustainable urban solutions, and urban design.

Widely known for its architectural and sustainability prowess,

Copenhagen is home to a vast number of world-leading architectural practices including **Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG)**, **Henning Larsen Architects**, **Cobe**, **Gehl Architects**, **C.F. Møller**, **3XN**, **Lendager Group**, **Dissing & Weitling**, **Lundgaard & Tranberg**, **Dorte Mandrup**, and many more.

Danish architecture is known for its focus on the human scale and its democratic approach, as well as its unique modern buildings that include a power plant with a ski slope on its roof called **CopenHill**, a bike-first urban design consisting of the **bicycle snake bridge**, and not to mention floating harbour baths, rooftop restaurants and recreation areas, and innovative residential buildings.

Facts: UNESCO-UIA World Capital of Architecture in Copenhagen in 2023

- The City of Copenhagen is





responsible for **the official WCA programme** taking place in 2023.

- **UNESCO-UIA World Capital of Architecture** takes place in Copenhagen from 17 January 2023 for three years, as chosen by UNESCO and **UIA**, the International Association of Architects, and will be the second ever held.

- WCA was designated the Danish capital by UNESCO and the UIA due to its high ambitions on climate, sustainable solutions, and livability, which have been key to the nomination.

- WCA launched officially in Copenhagen on **17 January 2023** with an event at the City Hall Square.

- WCA is part of the **28th UIA World Congress**, held in the city on **2-6 July 2023** at the Bella Center Copenhagen, aiming to promote architecture as a tool to reach the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In 2023 the UIA theme is 'Sustainable Futures – Leaving no one behind'.

- It is an initiative whereby UNESCO and the UIA have joined forces to develop and debate sustainable urban solutions for the benefit of future generations.

- It tours the world every three years

and graces the most prominent and world-leading cities within architecture that play host to the UIA's triennial world congress.

- WCA falls to the designated city which then commits to be a global forum for discussions on world-pressing challenges through the prisms of culture, heritage, urban planning, and architecture.

- WCA includes events, activities, exhibitions and debates on architecture and design to highlight and demonstrate the crucial role of architecture and culture in sustainable urban development for all.

- **Danish Architecture Center** in Copenhagen is one of the key partners for WCA and will be arranging Open House events, exhibitions, and talks.



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