



VIRTUOSO®'S 'FASHION WEEK OF TRAVEL' HOSTS THE BEST IN LUXURY FOR NETWORKING, TREND-SPOTTING & A LOOK AT WHAT'S NEW ON THE RUNWAY

VIRTUOSO TRAVEL WEEK WELCOMES A RECORD-BREAKING 5,670 ATTENDEES

LAS VEGAS (August 16, 2017) – This week international luxury travel agency network Virtuoso® kicked off its 29th annual Virtuoso Travel Week, luxury travel's answer to Fashion Week. From August 12th to 18th, Virtuoso's travel buyers will seek out the latest offerings in luxury experiences by meeting with thousands of travel purveyors, all preferred partners of the network. With seven percent growth in attendance, a record-breaking 5,670 travel professionals from 103 countries are congregating this week at Bellagio Resort & Casino, ARIA Resort & Casino and Vdara Hotel & Spa in Las Vegas, where they will conduct a staggering number of one-to-one meetings – over 327,000 of them, totaling more than 1.5 million meeting minutes or the equivalent of 2.9 years. The end goal for this global gathering: building relationships that lead to better traveler experiences.

Virtuoso's Opening Ceremony on Sunday marked the event's official beginning, featuring keynotes from Virtuoso Chairman and CEO Matthew D. Upchurch, *Socialnomics* author Erik Qualman, and noted cinematographer Louie Schwartzberg. The power of the human connection was center stage, as were a few celebrities. Beloved actress and fashion icon Sarah Jessica Parker welcomed the crowd, while international supermodel and Auckland International Ambassador Rachel Hunter spoke about her love for travel and its influence on her new television program, "Tour of Beauty." Both further connected the fashion world with luxury travel.

During his opening presentation, Upchurch outlined Virtuoso programs and initiatives that provide education, marketing, technology and communication to help its advisors achieve maximum success. He noted that it begins with creating a framework to develop new talented advisors. Indeed, Virtuoso Week's dedicated professional development offered 24 different sessions with over 5,000 class participants, a 26 percent increase over last year.

Upchurch stated, "At Virtuoso our goal is to help develop and support the 'connected advisor,' whether that means providing technology or further enhancing the advisor's relationships with their clients and our partners. There's no doubt the digital revolution has transformed travel and tourism, but the connection revolution aligns the skills, passion and desire to serve clients and Virtuoso travel advisors sit at the forefront."

This year Virtuoso also held its inaugural Community Globetrotting event, focusing on adventure travel, cruising, wellness and, new this year, family travel. Globetrotting supports Virtuoso Communities, an initiative that brings together Virtuoso advisors and partners to foster collaboration around shared passions and ultimately drive more sales in specific travel categories. Some 1,200 Virtuoso advisors and 135 partners participated in Globetrotting.

With more than 2,700 of Virtuoso's top advisors in attendance, preferred partners took the opportunity to unveil new products that will be delighting affluent travelers soon. Crystal Cruises revealed its new custom 777 private jet, *Crystal Skye*, while also naming Upchurch as godfather of the ultra-luxe aircraft. Crystal brought its new jet to Las Vegas specifically for Virtuoso Week attendees to see firsthand. Norwegian Cruise Line also offered a first look at its newest ship *Norwegian Bliss*, complete with electric racecars that guests will enjoy onboard the ship as well as virtual reality stations that provide a glimpse at the onboard experience.

Virtuoso also honored some of the standout performers within its network of over 800 travel agency locations throughout more than 45 countries, and their 16,000 travel advisors. Joining Upchurch on stage was David Kolner, Virtuoso's senior vice president of Global Member Partnerships, who announced Virtuoso's key production and its first-ever innovation awards:

- **Top Virtuoso Network Production:** Protravel International – New York, New York
- **Top Latin America Production:** ITG (International Travel Group) – Mexico City, Mexico
- **Top Australia/New Zealand Production:** Goldman Travel Corporation – Bondi Junction, Australia
- **Top Europe/Asia/Middle East Production:** Colletts Travel – London, United Kingdom
- **Highest Production per Advisor:** Churchill & Turen, Ltd. – Naperville, Illinois
- **Top Year-Over-Year Growth (Percent):** Travelex International Inc. – Hoffman Estates, Illinois
- **Top Year-Over-Year Growth (Revenue):** SmartFlyer – New York, New York
- **Virtuoso Network Engagement:** Cruises Etc. Travel LLC – Fort Worth, Texas
- **Top Virtuoso Air Production:** Travel Experts, Inc. – Raleigh, North Carolina
- **Virtuoso Innovation Award – Best Agency Office:** Select Collection – Stockholm, Sweden
- **Virtuoso Innovation Award – Best Client Service Experience:** Brownell – Birmingham, Alabama

To learn more about the Virtuoso network, visit Virtuoso.com. For a visual infographic of Virtuoso Travel Week, click [here](#).

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About Virtuoso:

Virtuoso® is the leading international travel agency network specializing in luxury and experiential travel. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 800 travel agency partners with more than 16,000 elite travel advisors in over 45 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with 1,700 of the world's best hotels and resorts, cruise lines, airlines, tour companies and premier destinations, the network provides its upscale clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. More than (U.S.) \$21.2 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit www.virtuoso.com.

Media Contacts:

Misty Ewing Belles
Managing Director, Global Public Relations
Virtuoso
Phone: 202.553.8817
Email: mewing@virtuoso.com

Lauren Wintemberg
Account Director
Alice Marshall Public Relations
Phone: 212.861.4031
Email: lauren@alicemarshall.com