



VIRTUOSO®
SPECIALISTS IN THE ART OF TRAVEL

VIRTUOSO® REVEALS THE HOTTEST SUMMER DESTINATIONS FOR CANADIANS

Travellers Flock to Italy, While Portugal Sees Increased Demand

TORONTO (May 11, 2015) – International luxury travel network, **Virtuoso®**, has released its lists of favored summer destinations by Canadian travelers in 2015. Recognized throughout the industry as an authoritative trend predictor, Virtuoso tapped into its data warehouse of more than \$35 billion in transactions to determine the top summer destinations and the hottest locales of 2015, as determined by Canada-based travelers. It turns out the well-heeled are still vacationing in Europe, though Virtuoso also identified that travelers are venturing to some more unique areas when it compared destinations with the most year-over-year demand.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the United States is a perennial favorite for Canadian travelers and total bookings are up by 10 percent over 2014. Given the U.S. continually ranks as the most visited country, with 53 percent of all Canadian travel dollars spent in the U.S., Virtuoso has removed it from the below lists to make way for others. It noted, though, that the love affair is mutual: Canada is the fastest growing country amongst Virtuoso's Top 10 Destinations for U.S. travellers and Vancouver is the big winner, accounting for almost half of the network's air bookings. Aside from the U.S., just where are Canadians are jetting to for their summer vacations?

The Virtuoso Top 10:

The most popular destinations for summer vacations based on future bookings.

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| 1. Italy | 6. Portugal |
| 2. United Kingdom | 7. Germany |
| 3. Israel | 8. South Africa |
| 4. France | 9. Australia |
| 5. Netherlands | 10. Croatia |

The Top 10 analysis: Europe continues to draw in visitors and great values abound thanks to the weakening euro this year. Even in Italy, which ranks as the foremost summer destination, savvy travelers can find more than 25 percent savings for summer bookings, and Germany's hotel average daily rates (ADRs) are about half the European average at approximately CAD \$506 per night. South Africa is seeing a 53 percent jump in annual sales and a 12 percent gain in summer bookings. Cape Town is the real beneficiary, with one-third of visitors beginning their journey from that point. Australia closely follows behind South Africa, indicating that winter travel to Down Under is gaining in popularity.

Next up, Virtuoso took a look at places experiencing the most year-over-year demand to see which destinations were emerging as the ones to watch.

The Virtuoso Hot 10:

Countries seeing the largest increase in summer bookings from 2014 to 2015.

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| 1. Portugal (+ 224%) | 6. Israel (+ 43%) |
| 2. Iceland (+ 85%) | 7. Switzerland (+ 23%) |
| 3. Italy (+ 70%) | 8. Greece (+ 18%) |
| 4. China (+ 64%) | 9. South Africa (+ 12%) |
| 5. Netherlands (+49%) | 10. Ireland (+ 5%) |

The Hot 10 analysis: With average daily rates (ADRs) for hotels 55 percent lower than the European average, Portugal's affordability is generating a huge surge in interest. The Azores and the Madeira archipelago are seeing the most benefit, representing almost one-fifth of travel to the area. It is no surprise that summer is the time to visit Iceland, and the 85 percent jump shows that plenty of travelers are eager to explore it. China trailed closely behind, largely thanks to Hong Kong, which accounts for almost half of its air traffic. And travel to Greece is back on the rise with 70 percent growth as travellers head to their favorite isles: Santorini, Mykonos and Crete.

Honorable mention: New Zealand, the darling destination of 2014, continues its meteoric rise with 70 percent growth in year-round travel; this is on top of its 140 percent leap from 2012 to 2013.

Virtuoso and its by-invitation-only network specialize in upscale and experiential travel. Its affiliated travel agency members serve as trusted advisors to their clients, providing them with advice, access, advocacy and accountability; a combination that is difficult to replicate online or find through other booking channels. Virtuoso has been operating in Canada since 1998 and now has 11 members with 29 office locations – some of Canada's most established and respected travel agencies. All data referenced above is sourced from Virtuoso's Canadian travel agency members. Projected summer travel is based on June through August 2015 bookings. For more information, visit www.virtuoso.com/canada.

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About Virtuoso

Virtuoso® is the leading network of luxury travel advisors and entities. This by-invitation-only organization comprises 355 agencies with more than 9,000 elite travel specialists in 26 countries throughout North America, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia-Pacific and Europe, as well as over 1,700 of the world's best travel providers and premier destinations. The network's member agencies generate over (US) \$14 billion annually in travel sales, making the group the most powerful in the luxury travel segment. Their relationships with the finest travel companies provide the network's affluent clientele with exclusive amenities, rare experiences and privileged access. For more information, visit www.virtuoso.com. To view Virtuoso's latest videos, go to www.youtube.com/user/VirtuosoTraveler.

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