



## **VIRTUOSO® TRAVEL WEEK'S (INDUSTRY) STAR-STUDED GALA MARKS THE END OF A SUCCESSFUL WEEK AND HONORS THE NETWORK'S MOST EXCEPTIONAL MEMBERS AND PARTNERS**

**LAS VEGAS (August 16, 2019)** – Last night [Virtuoso®](#) wrapped its 31<sup>st</sup> annual Virtuoso Travel Week with a sold-out gala that attracted more than 3,000 of the biggest names in luxury travel. The network also took the opportunity to recognize its most revered travel agencies, advisors, and preferred partners with its coveted Virtuoso Awards. Hosted by Virtuoso Chairman and CEO Matthew D. Upchurch, Senior Vice President of Marketing Terrie Hansen and Senior Vice President of Global Member Partnerships David Kolner, the event shined a spotlight on the network's most esteemed members and partners worldwide. Virtuoso Travel Week, held in Las Vegas at Bellagio Resort & Casino, ARIA Resort & Casino and Vdara Hotel & Spa, has taken place over the past week, running August 10-16.

Network peers determine Virtuoso Award winners: partners vote for agencies and advisors, and travel agency members select the victorious partners. Thousands of votes were cast in this year's awards, showing a high level of engagement in the honors.

"I'm always impressed and inspired by how our members and partners constantly innovate to deliver unforgettable travel experiences to their clients," said Upchurch. "It's appropriate that we honor our most remarkable Virtuosos on the final night of our annual 'family reunion,' when we've celebrated an incredible week of forging human connections. Those connections are the critical difference that sets Virtuoso apart and bolsters our collective reputation, motivating travelers to seek out our high-touch network."

The 2019 Virtuoso Award winners are:

### **Member Awards** (as voted by partners)

- **Most Hospitable Agency – US/Canada:** Travel Edge
- **Most Innovative Advisor – US/Canada:** Keith Waldon, Departure Lounge
- **Virtuoso Rising Star – US/Canada:** Blaire Kochar, Brownell Travel
- **Most Admired Advisor – Asia/Pacific:** Anthony Goldman, Goldman Travel Corporation
- **Most Admired Advisor – Europe/Middle East/Africa:** Jenny Graham, Quintessentially Travel
- **Most Admired Advisor – Latin America/Caribbean:** Paola Prieto, ITG-International Travel Group
- **Most Admired Advisor – Canada:** Roger Kershaw, Travel Edge
- **Most Admired Advisor – US:** Josh Alexander, Protravel International

### **Partner Awards** (as voted by members)

- **Airline of the Year:** Emirates Airline
- **Service Partner of the Year:** Travelex Insurance Services
- **Sustainable Tourism Leadership – Preferred Partner:** Nomadic Expeditions
- **Cruise Line of the Year:** Crystal Cruises

In addition, Virtuoso announced this year's outstanding cruise performers at a reception on August 13:

- **Top Producer – Virtuoso Voyages:** Ralph Bias, Amazing Cruises
- **Virtuoso Rising Star – Cruise:** Frances Sarrett, McCabe World Travel
- **Most Innovative Advisor – Cruise Sales:** Jonathan Phillips, Cassis Travel Services
- **Best Virtuoso Voyages Experience:** Kusadasi by Sea Song Tours - Turkey
- **Virtuoso Cruise Ambassador of the Year – Member:** Kimberly Wilson Wetty, Valerie Wilson Travel
- **Virtuoso Cruise Ambassador of the Year – Partner:** Chris Austin, Seabourn

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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 1,000 travel agency partners with 20,000 elite travel advisors in 50 countries throughout North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Middle East. Drawing upon its preferred relationships with over 1,800 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.) \$26.4 billion in annual travel sales makes Virtuoso a powerhouse in the luxury travel industry. For more information, visit [www.virtuoso.com](http://www.virtuoso.com).

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