



VIRTUOSO[®] RETURNS TO HONG KONG FOR ITS ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM, BRINGING ITS GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO ASIA'S WORLD CITY

HONG KONG (April 28, 2015) – Twelve years after hosting its first Virtuoso Symposium, Hong Kong welcomes back leading international luxury travel network, **Virtuoso**[®], for its annual summit. Attracting 493 top travel executives from 42 countries, all partners of the esteemed network, the Symposium offers attendees an opportunity to address industry issues amongst peers and build successful business relationships, all while exploring a destination that is popular with travelers who utilize the services and connections of a Virtuoso advisor.

This year Virtuoso brought together speakers including Larry Pimentel, President and CEO of Azamara Club Cruises, Jason Clampet, Co-Founder and Head of Content for the travel technology website Skift, and William Paley, Senior Associate at tonychi and associates, for a look at the luxury market from a global perspective. Pimentel shared findings from a recently commissioned report from Boston Consulting Group for Royal Caribbean Cruise Line that shows a strong and universal desire for local, authentic and enriching experiences amongst the affluent. Clampet shared from Skift's Megatrend report that a lifestyle brand that connects travelers' ideals of themselves with the world has become the one vehicle left for building a long-term meaningful relationship with customers. And Paley shared the role that design plays in influencing a guest's hotel stay, as it promotes a stronger connection and lasting impression.

According to Matthew D. Upchurch, Chairman and CEO of Virtuoso, this spells great news for his organization as well as the travel advisor profession. "This is the first time this industry has had four generations of travelers spending at major levels of contribution, all at the same time: Matures, Boomers, GenX-ers and Millennials. What we're finding is a universal desire to collaborate with a trusted advisor, plus the willingness to pay for that opportunity. This isn't an American mindset; our speakers are telling us this need exists worldwide. With continued global expansion at the forefront of our growth strategy, we feel confident about our next steps as a network. The consumer's want for human connection bodes well for us and for our agency members, and what we are able to deliver together with our partners for the traveler."

A significant component of Virtuoso's Symposium is the ability to educate its participants on the host destination. Industry executives will enjoy lunches and evenings out at several of the network's preferred hotels: Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong; The Ritz-Carlton, Hong Kong; Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong; The Peninsula, Hong Kong; and, Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong. Additional event sponsors include the Hong Kong Tourism Board, Regent Seven Seas Cruises, Oceania Cruises, Norwegian Cruise Lines, Holland America Line/Seabourn, Abercrombie & Kent, and Shangri-La Hotels & Resorts.

"Every year we choose to hold our Symposium at a destination is that is significant to our travel agency partners and their clients," continued Upchurch. "Hong Kong is the only city to host us twice in the history of this event, and it is because of the cosmopolitan offerings, lively culture, the kindness of its citizens and the beauty of this city, as well as the tremendous support we received from our partners, including the Hong Kong Tourism Board. We are thrilled to have explored this exciting destination once again, twelve years later, and we are certain our advisors will tell their clients why Hong Kong is a must-see for their future travels."

Virtuoso holds its annual Symposium in some of the world's most stunning and exhilarating cities around the world, from Cairo to Cannes, Singapore to St. Petersburg, Madrid to Mexico City, Buenos Aires to Berlin. Hong Kong is the only destination to have now hosted this prestigious group twice: 2003 and 2015. As the leaders in luxury travel, the Virtuoso network is responsible for annual travel sales in excess of (U.S.) \$14 billion.

For more information on Virtuoso, visit www.Virtuoso.com.

###

About Virtuoso:

Virtuoso® is the leading network of luxury travel advisors and entities. This by-invitation-only organization comprises over 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.

Media Contacts:

Misty Ewing Belles
Director, Global Public Relations
Virtuoso
Phone: 202.553.8817
E-mail: mewing@virtuoso.com

Lauren Wintemberg
Account Manager
Alice Marshall Public Relations
Phone: 212.861.4031
E-mail: lauren@alicemarshall.com