



Travellers To Venture Beyond Major Cities In Post-COVID World

"Travel will be expensive, it will be limited," predicts Claudia Rossi Hudson

Last updated Aug 13, 2020

LATTE | Luxury Australian Travel Trade E-News | 13 August 2020

Major tourist cities around the world could expect less overseas visitors in the 'new normal' post-COVID environment as travellers move beyond popular hubs to the serenity of rural countrysides, says Mary Rossi Travel Managing Director, Claudia Rossi Hudson.



Claudia Rossi Hudson, Managing Director, Mary Rossi Travel

Lured not only by natural landscapes, but travellers will also now better appreciate the pure, fresh air of destinations where the hectic, hustle and bustle, frequent queuing and close encounters of city life and public transport are left behind. It will be a new luxury that has always existed.

"People are now not interested in going to other cities," Rossi Hudson told **LATTE**. "They want to go to regional areas, even in Australia."

"Overseas, we predict that they may not want to particularly rush back to Paris, but they would love to spend some time out in the Champagne region of France, or perhaps the Dordogne and areas that are away from the big cities and big crowds," Rossi Hudson said.

"Mask wearing. Is that really how a tourist wants to remember their experience in Rome? It's not a great Facebook post you'll want to share with friends!" she quipped.

The luxury travel expert is also wary of the price point travel will be in the future, cautioning that "travel will be expensive, it will be limited, and it will probably be for the privileged".

“I think particularly with the young people there will be less people going to a destination only to snap a photo, ticking it off their bucket list and sharing it on social media. They will be looking for extraordinary experiences in the destinations that they go to.”

In Australia, Rossi Hudson says her Sydney-based Virtuoso member agency's clients remain “nervous” making any near-future travel plans. The recent re-closure of Victoria and Queensland's borders are proving an obstacle for domestic travel, particularly for those Sydneysiders who traditionally head north during the winter months to the Sunshine State's coastline, or to the Top End of the Northern Territory.

“What we can't wait for is the opening up of domestic touring so we can offer our clients options through the Kimberley, and to cruise the Barrier Reef and around Tasmania.”

“I believe what will happen as a result of this pandemic is that Australians will not just want to rush overseas all the time, they will permanently want to be going and exploring more of Australia. They won't think that a tour around the Barrier Reef or Tasmania is going to be a second-rate experience because we're perfectly capable of putting on wonderful experiences.”

“Our coastlines are beautiful and there's a lot to see and do, and I see there is an opportunity for other operators to get back into small ship or yacht charter business.” She said the Franklin River in Tasmania's wilderness presents one such opportunity.

She said there is a greater demand now for yacht charters and property buyouts, but those tend to be away from bigger cities where face masks aren't required.

“We're starting to do a bit of private plane and private yacht charters. There are some beautiful places to do that in Sydney and also Hamilton Island, for example, where there are some beautiful yachts to charter. They can be captained or operated independently as a bareboat.”

For existing clients that have had their cruise arrangement suspended by COVID, some are moving their 2020 reservations 12 months into the future and taking advantage of the generous and flexible rebooking policies.

“With ocean and river lines likely to be operating with reduced capacity, the ability to hold a cabin in 2021 is going to become increasingly limited.”

Until Australian state border restrictions are eased and ahead of international bans being lifted, Mary Rossi Travel is encouraging locals to take luxury Staycations in Sydney, where they can splurge on extravagant harbour views from hotels and enjoy fine-dining experiences, with dramatically fewer people in the city due to social distancing requirements.

Rossi Hudson's own recommendation, if you can get one, is book your client a self-contained house, cottage or chalet in the mountains for a small group of family and friends.

“They'll enjoy the fresh air and open fires and the ability to go for a walk in the mountains. Visit the local cafes and then wander back to their own piece of private, safe, luxury in the middle of a paddock somewhere with the most extraordinary views of the Blue Mountains.”

Lead image: Saint Emilion, Dordogne | credit: Jonathan Farber on Unsplash

