



L'Amandier, a new five-star boutique hotel with private residences in Morocco's undiscovered Atlas Mountains, has opened with just that in mind.

It is a stripped back, soulful, environmentally-conscious escape with unforgettable service and 360 degree views over the surrounding Toubkal National Park.

British CEO Anwar Harland-Khan explains: "L'Amandier's vision of luxury travel moves away from the opulence and common trappings of 'luxury' and embraces a more

peaceful existence where nature takes centre stage. As our main inspiration, it was hugely important to us that our development was sensitive to the surroundings so as not to impact the delicate ecosystem. We have built on only five per cent of the land mass, employed local craftspeople and utilised traditional materials for construction."

LAST MONTH, airline Virgin America pulled the ultimate stunt to promote luxury travel: selling a pair of specially made shoes, designed to replicate the business offered in its first class flights, on the ground. The airline's PR agency wanted to showcase its business in a unique way, making the fashionable, sophisticated target market take notice. For sale on eBay, the 'first class shoes' come with white Italian leather, mood lighting, Wi-Fi, a phone charger and a tiny screen.

That isn't the only eccentric spin on exclusive travel as of late. Luxury online travel company eSnoos

based on Instagram, is sharing power, as well as some of the VIPs of holidaymakers who are relaxation beyond eight of bed, and is set to go in the effort of sun, picnics, hot air balloons, photography, a choice of 120 pajamas and shoes per night from 64,760. In the deluxe package, there's unique odd-ons, outfits, make-up artists, and a chauffeur, as well as a personal masseuse for your holiday. In the September 2016

opening of Virgin Holidays' new retail unit at Stockport Shopping Centre, brand heads when it made browsing and buying holidays an interesting and immersive experience. A bar takes centre stage in the shop, helping shoppers to get in the mood for purchasing their next vacation with a complimentary cocktail. When choices have been narrowed down, they can consult the massive world map, helping sales content from exotic lands to every

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continent. Google Earth-based sets bring experience to life through virtual reality and those seeking a true on board can take the fully functional Virgin Atlantic Upper Class chair.

Evidently, the luxury travel market, like many others as a result of new technology is rapidly evolving. But are high-end consumers following suit? Do they now have increased, travel hungry expectations?



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It would seem so with the new trend of the world's best travel experiences – think diving in the Great Barrier Reef, seeing gorillas in Rwanda and a helicopter flight over the Grand Canyon. A YouGov poll carried out earlier this year reported that 60 per cent of British adults would look out over a new horizon over 'big life moments'.

Homeowners are following suit with travel requests, according to luxury travel and tour operator Kinoki, including sleeping in a candle-lit tree house in South Africa, watching elephants in a former restaurant during a five-star hotel stay and having a private driver to explore Sri Lanka with 200000, dinner on a private island in the Maldives and a night flight, with the stunning, illuminated 5-year old of Madhavara's particular attraction at present.

Managed by director of Sales, Derek Jones, has noted this trend. He says: "Travel has become so integral to people's lives. There's a desire to see and experience the world like never before."

As a result, 2016, for many destination are ever-developing, with hidden gems in undiscovered areas of the world, bespoke packages to take to a more magnificent sights as possible and build once in a

lifetime experience that many could only dream of.

Kinoki maintains the popularity of destinations around the globe and recently released The Kinoki Worldwide Inside Report 2016, offering insights into the high-end marketplace, as well as other areas of the travel industry. The Maldives and Thailand remain the most popular luxury destinations, followed by Mauritius, Sri Lanka and Italy. Antigua, blessed with beautiful beaches and history, is trending, having overtaken Barbados as the Caribbean favourite.

Award-winning luxury holiday provider Elegant Resorts gives an interesting look down on subprime properties. They consider the Caribbean, Dubai and Cyprus as the most sought after, with the Mediterranean and Seychelles as ideal for quieter holidays.

For winter sun, they recommend The Ritz-Carlton A&MMA in Tenerife and expect to see Cancun as a fashionable destination for summer 2017.

Virgin Holidays note a shift in luxury holiday requirements with many now looking for less sunbathing and more exploration. Mark Anderson, managing director, says: "Gone are the days where all people wanted to do was fly and flop in the sun. We're seeing more demands for adventurous activities and bespoke experiences."

Fortunately, travel companies are ready, turning the stereotype of touring in a packed coach, listening to pre-recorded guides on its head and, instead, providing bespoke, bespoke experiences and limited edition travel for the adventure-hungry tourist. According to Kinoki, Namibia, Kenya and Madagascar are shaping their offering around the type of once in a lifetime experience.

Scott Dunn, provider of a diligent, tailor-made travel, urges this market specifically and has produced a 2017 hot list. They expect Canada to be popular with 2017, making the 15th anniversary of the Canadian Confederation and opening the admission to some of the country's most impressive landmarks and sites. Scott Dunn is preparing bespoke itineraries to explore the whole country, from the abandoned wilderness of British Columbia to remote hunting lodges and cozy cabins. For a truly exclusive experience, visitors can embrace their inner cowboy on

the rugged, scenic and historic



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Cruises are still said to be popular for a high-end getaway (Virgin Holidays' Glasgow once embarked one in 10 enquiries since opening to cruise holidays) but when it comes to luxury, it can certainly be taken up a notch. Scott Dunn's hot list includes Costa and Indonesia (complete with a private crew man subcontracted as a top choice for next year) as well as the opportunity to glide around South East Asia on the world's biggest timber sailing yacht, the Larimar.

For those looking for luxury without a long-haul flight, Macdonald Hotel Group, the UK's largest hotel chain, has opened a five-star resort on the Stranraer Golf Course. Although typically a resort-holiday area, there is a previously undiscovered and stunning estate with 18th-century mansions and a private estate and up the mountains. The chic Macdonald Macduff – the only resort in the area – combines premium service and contemporary styling with unspoiled natural surroundings and breathtaking views.

Of course, not all resorts can afford to splash out on the most exquisite of five-star breaks but that does not mean rich destinations are out of reach. Traveler, the world's leading foreign exchange specialist, recently launched its search engine, Luxury the Last, which aims to be a single source of information for an indulgent holiday planner on a budget.

And, whilst most wouldn't look to visit a hotel, The Luxury Hotel Guide, compiled by The Budget Traveler, Erik Blom, has just this in mind. It is a stripped back, world, environmentally-conscious escape with unspoiled views and 360 degree views over the surrounding Toubkal National Park.

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