Consumer & Travel: Reflections and Predictions for 2024 and Beyond







## Introduction

A Route of One's Own Plan-free travel is on the rise

Aim to Zzzzs A new era of sleep tourism

**Appetite for Culture** Can an appetite for culture ever be satiated?

**Destination: Diversity** DEI is an increasingly important topic for the hospitality industry

Need to Get Personal Many travelers are prioritizing private, intimate, and personalized experiences

### **On With the Show**

How "gig tripping" and "sports tourism" have become major league travel trends

## **Turning Tables on Hotel Hospitality**

More and more, dining is becoming the central feature of hotel stays

## Introduction

unny thing about groundbreaking events: The earth beneath one's feet may barely budge, but the planet will shudder just the same. On my family holiday to Amsterdam this summer, I found myself "gig tripping" along with thousands of others in the right place at the right time and with the right company - swaying, singing and dancing to Taylor Swift at a concert filled with dedicated joy-filled fans. I was swept up in the moment but also the movement.

And we weren't the only ones who traveled miles from home to see The Eras Tour. While it wasn't the only reason we were in Amsterdam, it was the inspiration that drew us and kept us on trend. "Gig tripping," "set-jetting," and "sports tourism" have become powerful motivators for travel of late, as fans of entertainment cross borders and oceans to see their favorites perform live or to visit the backdrops of movies, TV shows,

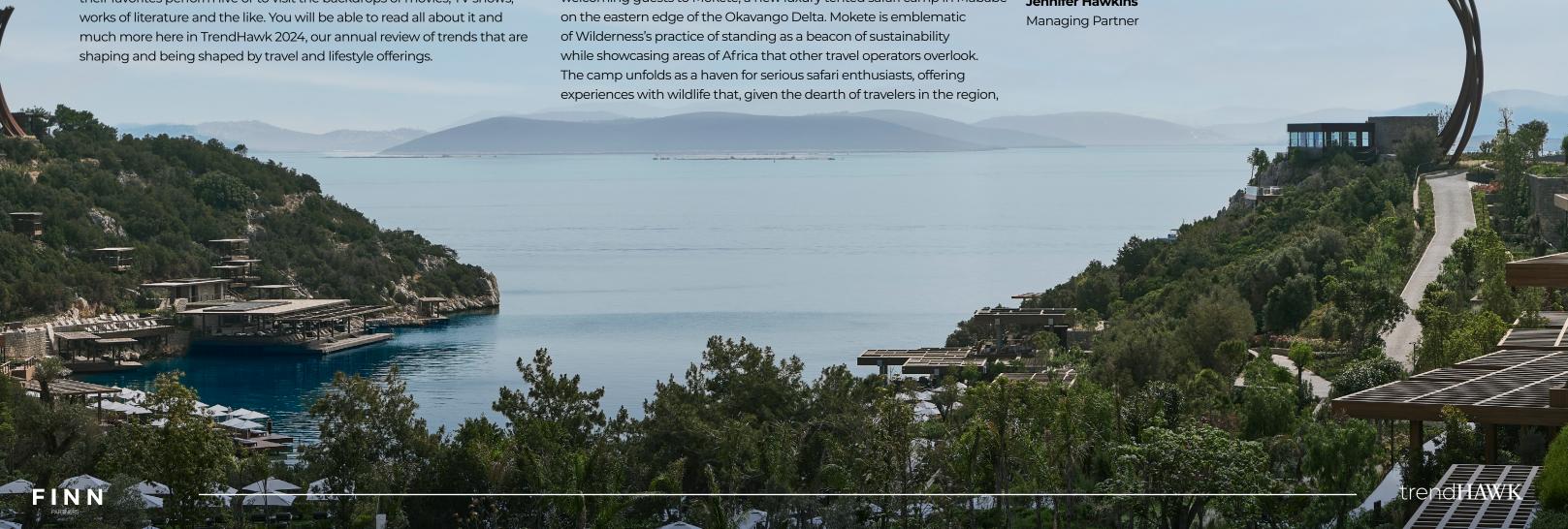
Thinking about it, managing our clients' PR strategy is much like attending a Taylor Swift concert, where enthusiasm, storytelling, versatility, and connection are key. Just as Taylor captivates her audience with energy and compelling narratives, we bring the same passion to crafting unique stories for our clients. We remain adaptable, tailoring strategies to fit each brand's identity while staying fresh and relevant. We create meaningful connections with media and stakeholders, ensuring our approach resonates. Like Taylor, our goal is to deliver exceptional results that leave a lasting impact, ensuring clients feel valued and their campaigns celebrated.

Following Amsterdam, for instance, I headed on business to Botswana for a press trip where our enduring client Wilderness recently began welcoming guests to Mokete, a new luxury tented safari camp in Mababe seemed wonderfully unfamiliar with humanity and almost skittish to our presence. Botswana's culture is a vibrant tapestry woven with rich traditions, warm hospitality, and a deep respect for nature and community.

The takeaway? Connections come in many forms: at Taylor Swift's concert in Amsterdam, I felt a deep bond through her personal stories and vibrant performances, while on a safari in Botswana, I experienced a profound connection with the land, its wildlife, and the local culture. So no matter where you travel or what you do, the possibility of connection is always present and serves as a powerful motivator for all travelers.

Happy reading - and happy travels.

Jennifer Hawkins Managing Partner



# A Route of One's Own

Plan-free travel is on the rise, says Condé Nast Traveler. Tired of fearing they're missing out on destinations of the moment, many vacationers are now tapping services that specialize in arranging getaways with no details provided until they're just about to get underway. Neat!

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While surprise adventures are a modern twist on travel, Global Wellness Summit's The Future of Wellness 2024 Trends spotlights the popularity of age-old pilgrimages -i.e., journeys that follow established routes and treks involving observation or participation in spiritual ceremonies. These guided journeys are designed for experiential and wellness-minded travelers focused on physical activity, fitness, and deeper cultural connectedness. Also neat!



## But there's a third option that's gaining popularity, one that offers flexibility without the surprise: travel on an established route but at a rhythm of one's own.

With more than 5,000 highly vetted guides operating in 170 countries, **ToursByLocals** is a source for customizable and immersive guided tours geared to travelers' preferences – whatever they may be. Night owls and vampires desiring to beat the heat, for instance, can head out after the sun goes down to stargaze in Arizona, see the Eiffel Tower light up Paris, or navigate a night market in Istanbul led by ToursByLocals guides who really know their way around... even in the dark.

On the island of Santorini, travelers seeking a more personalized experience are increasingly choosing to stay off the typical tourist routes. In Oia, the island's most renowned tourism hub, **Santo Pure**, part of the **Santo Collection**, offers an ideal retreat. Positioned just far enough from the bustling village, it provides a serene environment with unobstructed views of the Aegean Sea, local cuisine without the crowds, and luxurious suites that ensure complete privacy. Whether guests prefer to start their day with a morning yoga session followed by relaxation at one of Santo Pure's six pools or enjoy a spa treatment after a private guided hike, they are encouraged to move at their own pace.

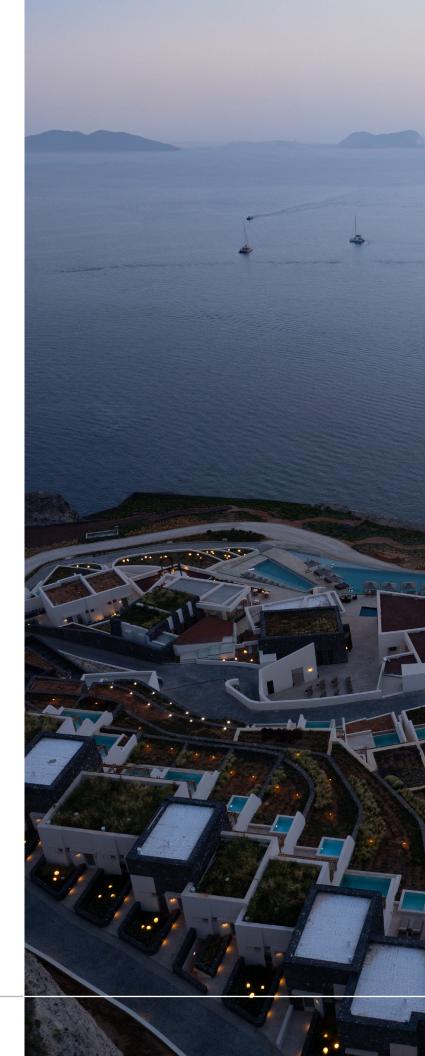
This spring 2024, Santo Collection expanded its offerings with two new properties: **Santo Mine** and **The Villas by Santo Collection**. These embody the brand's commitment to providing guests with exceptional privacy, breathtaking views, and a

unique, unhurried experience in one of Santorini's most picturesque settings.

Vacationing isn't the only way to travel, of course. **Tradewind Aviation**, the market leader in regional air mobility, makes the case for corporate types to leverage its fleet of Pilatus PC-12 turboprops for time-saving, hassle-free business travel over relatively short distances.

Consider travel within Florida, where Tradewind has a new base near Palm Beach that serves clients throughout the southeast. While a group of executives may save money traveling via commercial airline to less-prominent locations, the time and hassles involved – getting to and from major airports, waiting at TSA security checkpoints, walking to gates, waiting again to board and then waiting again to claim baggage - really add up. Meanwhile, Tradewind's PC-12s carry up to eight passengers in air-conditioned comfort, and can access smaller airports not typically available to commercial planes or larger private operators. That saves time on transportation from residence to airport and airport to client, as well as with boarding, as travelers are able to access their flight with no TSA check, until 10 minutes before takeoff.

That's a rhythm any corporate travel manager can groove to.



# Aim to ZZZZS

Among the eye-opening stats from a recent travel trend report, Booking.com revealed that in the new era of sleep tourism, 68% of U.S. travelers want to solely focus on uninterrupted shut-eye when they travel. That's enough to keep a hotel recreation manager up at night!

But who can blame them? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – aka, CDC – one in three adults does not get enough sleep, while Wakefield Research reports that 63 percent of Americans frequently struggle to get a good night's sleep while on vacation.



## Sleep tourism is on the rise, estimated to grow by nearly 8 percent and over \$400 billion between 2023 and 2028

No surprise, then, that sleep tourism is on the rise, estimated to grow by nearly 8 percent and over \$400 billion between 2023 and 2028, according to a recent analysis by HTF Marketing Intelligence. Fortunately, many properties are on top of the trend, offering sleep programs featuring rooms designed to minimize distractions and discomforts and retreats that provide tools and knowledge to improve sleep on one's own.

"Sleep is one of those things guests ask about all the time," says Tammy Pahel, vice president of spa & wellness at Carillon Miami Wellness Resort. Pahel notes that 80% of the population have sleep problems related to everyday stresses such as work, family, and bad habits as opposed to medical issues. "Before you know it, sleep programming will be a prerequisite at any resort, not just those focused on wellness."

Under Pahel, who is on the Sleep Initiative of the Global Wellness Institute, Carillon Miami Wellness Resort has been an innovator in sleep programming. Each of the resort's luxury apartments is outfitted with an Al-powered Bryte Balance<sup>™</sup> Smart Bed with an adaptive core of intelligent cushions that silently change in firmness to eliminate pressure imbalances. The relaxation experience Somnify combines curated audio with head- to-toe motion which transitions guests into peaceful sleep. And, an in-room Infinity Salt Air Machine emits a near-invisible aerosol of salt particles to help clear the lungs and sinuses for unobstructed breathing, while ActivePure airpurification technology scrubs pathogens from the in-room atmosphere.

The resort also offers an immersive, multi-day Sleep Well Retreat in partnership with Bryte Balance, as well as a Sleep Circuit, with eight touchless wellness technologies to address sleep issues, such as a salt

float bath which uses 800 pounds of Epsom salt to soothe guests into deep relaxation, and a Somadome personal meditation pod with a zero-gravity bed for sensuous experiences to relax and heal through aromatherapy or vibrational infrared sound therapy.

Surrounded by the beauty of the Catskills in Monticello, New York, YO1 Health Resort invites guests to make up for lost sleep with Insomnia Management. The three-night minimum program teaches strategies to bring harmony to the body and mind through therapies and activities including Ayurvedic massage with medicated oil, acupuncture, yoga, meditation and more to stimulate timely production of melatonin and encourage undisturbed sleep.

Across the Atlantic, Brown's Hotel, a Rocco Forte Hotel in Mayfair, invites guests to discover their best sleep yet with Catch Your Forte Winks at Brown's in partnership with the luxury British sleepwear and accessory brand YOLKE. Anticipate a blissful night's sleep with a silk sleepover kit from YOLKE, Irene Forte Skincare's Hibiscus Night Cream, relaxing herbal tea turndown, and a Buona Notte Facial at The Spa at Brown's.

High in the sky, **Turkish Airlines** is taking inflight comfort for sleepy passengers to new heights the Crystal Business Class suite. Recently unveiled at the Farnborough International Airshow 2024 in Hampshire, UK, and set to be featured on the carrier's transcontinental flights, the suite features an adjustable door and privacy panel, generous 23-inchwide seat with increased footwell space, and soothing design touches from lighter, warmer colors to marblestyle table and rose gold finishes.





Can an appetite for culture ever be satiated? Not this year, according to Hilton's 2024 Trends Report, which revealed approximately half of travelers, regardless of their generation, are interested in culinary experiences, and 86% long for local and regional cuisine. That's good news for travel operators offering opportunities to experience the same, as well as the cultures that do the cooking.

"Culinary tourism is seeing significant growth as more travelers seek to explore destinations through local cuisine," said Elise Carlin, associate vice president at FINN Partners, pointing to a report from ResearchAndMarkets.com that the global culinary tourism market reached \$964 billion in 2023 and is expected to hit \$3.515 trillion by 2032. "Many of our clients are emphasizing cultural experiences through dining, especially handson learning opportunities where guests can get involved in the culinary traditions and process."

In the Yasawa Islands of Fiji, the intimate private island eco-resort **Turtle Island** forgoes a traditional restaurant but instead invites guests to dine together and get to know the resort family at a communal table that "floats" around the property. Dinner parties are hosted nightly in the same five-acre garden that supplies 80% of the island's produce, on top of the highest peak on the island, Mount Ford, or on one of the island's 12 private beaches.



Along with fresh farm-to-table Fijian dishes, seafood caught by guests or local fishermen, and no end of quality and the liberty of choice." fine wines and cocktails, the dining arrangement History and culture go fork-in-hand at the table at serves to reveal the local way of life to guests, who tend to linger and join traditional, post-prandial Fijian The Shelbourne in Dublin, which is celebrating its revelry from songs and dances to storytelling and 200<sup>th</sup> year of serving elegance and Irish history in 2024. Honoring the hotel's role in local history, a unique sipping kava. private dining experience for groups unfolds in The "Since the inception of Turtle Island, the goals have Constitution Suite, where details of the Constitution of the Irish Free State were hammered out in 1922. always been to preserve the traditional Yasawan heritage and culture, minimize any negative impact The menu is inspired by the era, with dishes such the resort may have on its surrounding culture and as Carville stout braised beef with champ potato, habitat, and enhance that heritage, culture, and Carbury mushroom, and Grannagh bacon lardons environment while educating and showcasing Turtle and crispy kale. "We expect to see more hotels join the Island's unique beauty," said Richard Evanson Jr., trend, providing dining experiences unique to their managing director, who, rather than shutter the resort own location or history," said Director of Food and during the pandemic, used its two-year closing to Beverage Hector Gutierrez.

bolster onsite food production - from learning animal "Out on the seas, **Seabourn** recently put a cultural husbandry to expanding beehives for more effective pollination of plants – and bartered excess supplies spin on its newest fine dining restaurant Solis, which celebrates Mediterranean cuisine inspired while sharing knowledge with neighboring villages. "In other words, to help build a stronger Yasawan by destinations visited by the line's ultra-luxury community which preserves and values its heritage vessels. Debuted on Seabourn Quest in January and through sustainable tourism." open across three more ships through spring and

summer, Solis also celebrates the culture of Seabourn. Alessandro and Federico Masilla, owners of Il Vizio Conceived of and shaped by two of the line's most restaurants at Sina De La Ville in Milan and Sina experienced culinarians, Master Chef and Culinary Bernini Bristol in Rome, both members of the Sina Partner Anton "Tony" Egger in partnership with Senior Hotels family, have seen a surge in clientele from Corporate Chef Franck Salein, the fresh-and-healthy North America, despite - or perhaps thanks to -Mediterranean concept took inspiration from guest their focus on catering to locals. Both restaurants feedback. "What we discovered all comes together at serve refined Italian cuisine as well as A-class sushi, Solis, where we're telling a story of culinary richness offering diners the best of two worlds. The atypical and presenting pure enjoyment," said Egger. combo caters to those wishing to explore the Italian gastronomic heritage and those with a taste for exotic flavors from distant cultures.

"The key," said the Masillas, "is no compromise on

hink your hotel or travel operation can afford to ignore diversity, equity, and inclusion? Think again. Amid a boom in domestic travel and steady growth of cultural tourism, DEI is an increasingly important topic for the hospitality industry, whose people-centric success depends on creating environments and experiences that celebrate cultural diversity and are welcoming and accommodating to all guests, regardless of their backgrounds.

The numbers are enlightening. In the U.S., where for the first time in history population growth is being driven by minorities, estimates for annual domestic leisure travel spends in 2019 from MMGY Global really add up: \$113.9 billion for Hispanic and Latino; \$109.4 billion for Black; and \$82.6 billion for Asian American and Pacific Islander; while LGBTQ+ travelers spent \$218 billion worldwide in 2018, according Globetrender.

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DEI is not just about attracting travelers who are in the position to spend, of course, but also about creating a work environment that is inclusive and respectful. Fortunately, travel and hospitality are among industries that are leading the DEI conversation. **Hyatt Hotels**, for example, provides unconscious bias training to all employees – that's 130,000 people across 70+ countries – and has established employee resource groups for women, people of color, those who identify as LGBTQ and more. **Marriott International** has pledged significant investment toward diverse ownership and established a Diversity and Inclusion Council to oversee the creation and implementation of strategies to promote diversity and inclusion.

Meanwhile, in 2021, with the pandemic still rattling the industry, the American Hotel & Lodging Association Foundation announced a \$5 million commitment to a five-year plan to advance DEI, noting the importance of doing more to build on its legacy of opening doors of opportunity to all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender.

The same year, the **U.S. Travel Association**, which sees DEI as key to strengthening organizations by bringing new ideas, perspectives, and openmindedness to the forefront, partnered with **Tourism Diversity Matters** (TDM) to aid the industry in becoming truly diverse, equitable and inclusive for all. Last October, TDM's flagship conference The Collective Experience drew more than 260 leaders from across corporate, nonprofit, government, and academic sectors to share insights and concepts about DEI best practices, with a goal of fostering a culture of respect, understanding and belonging that drives economic growth and innovation.

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"Embracing DEI is not just a moral imperative, it's essential for fostering a welcoming and enriching experience for all. By celebrating diverse cultures and perspectives, we enhance the vibrancy and appeal of destinations, ensuring that travelers feel seen, respected and valued," said Helen Shelton, global chief diversity officer for FINN Partners. "This inclusive approach drives innovation, broadens market reach, and strengthens community ties, ultimately leading to growth and a more connected world."



## Need to Get Personal

### In 2024, travelers are increasingly seeking exclusive, bespoke adventures.

The trend likely stems from the worldwide lockdown, during which affluent vacationers, eager for new sights, booked custom-designed travel, leading to a noteworthy surge in private aviation that was seen as less-risky health-wise than commercial flights.

Now, some are taking personalization to natural extremes. According to Booking.com's most recent global survey, 59% of travelers want to hit the road alone, including 70% of parents who are ready to ditch the kids and their partners for trips in which they can prioritize self-growth. Meanwhile, tailor-made travel has been estimated by **Fast Company** to grow at an annual clip of nearly 8% to over \$500 billion by 2029.

**The Point** on the shores of Upper Saranac Lake in the Adirondacks of New York is a model of personalization. With just 11 rooms and a well-spoken policy of inviting guests to treat the hotel and its surroundings as their own home, guests are welcome to serve themselves from fully stocked bars scattered across the 75acre property. Occupying the site of a former Rockefeller Great Camp, The Point is leading a new twist on luxury: all-inclusive travel that bundles unique offerings and special amenities such as multi-course, winepaired meals served communally in an elevated house party atmosphere; exclusive caviar tastings on the hotel's Elco yacht, with an expert to guide enjoyment of the decadent treat; and after-dinner tastings of rare tequilas, cognacs and whiskeys.



In the Caribbean, **Blue Diamond Resorts** has made personalization a calling card, with 60 properties and a diverse array of brands that are strategically designed to cater to a wide range of client preferences. The Royalton CHIC brand, for instance, offers all-in luxury at properties in Punta Cana, Cancun, and Antigua, coaxing travelers with a Party Your Way concept that offers options for guests to enjoy their stay, from unexpected events to tailored amenities such as exclusive CBDbased spa treatments, anti-hangover kits, and entertainment hosted by "CHIC Angels," who get parties started and help keep them going.

Seabourn, the leader in ultra-luxury cruises and expedition travel, pampers guests with unique, all-inclusive journeys at sea. Along with the brand's new fine dining restaurant Solis celebrating Mediterranean cuisine inspired by the places visited by the line's ultra-luxury vessels, Seabourn continues to deliver exclusive culinary experiences such as in-suite caviar service, Shopping with the Chef, and Caviar in the Surf. "The innovations we've seen in the evolution of the all-inclusive concept reveals that hotels and resorts are listening to their guests and paying attention when they arrive," said Catherine Colford, partner at Maverick Creative, who works with The Point. She also noted that travel media who hadn't previously written about allinclusives were especially interested. "From a PR standpoint, that revealed the importance of always watching trends and looking at where they're headed to generate interest in how travel providers are shaping vacations for their guests."





s fun as it was watching Tay cheer on Trav during the Kansas City Chiefs' march to victory in Super Bowl LVIII earlier this year, televised imagery isn't always enough for rabid followers of entertainment and sports. No surprise, then, that "gig tripping" and "sports tourism" have become major league travel trends, with hotels, destinations, and travel services getting in the mix and investing in a trend that seems here to stay.

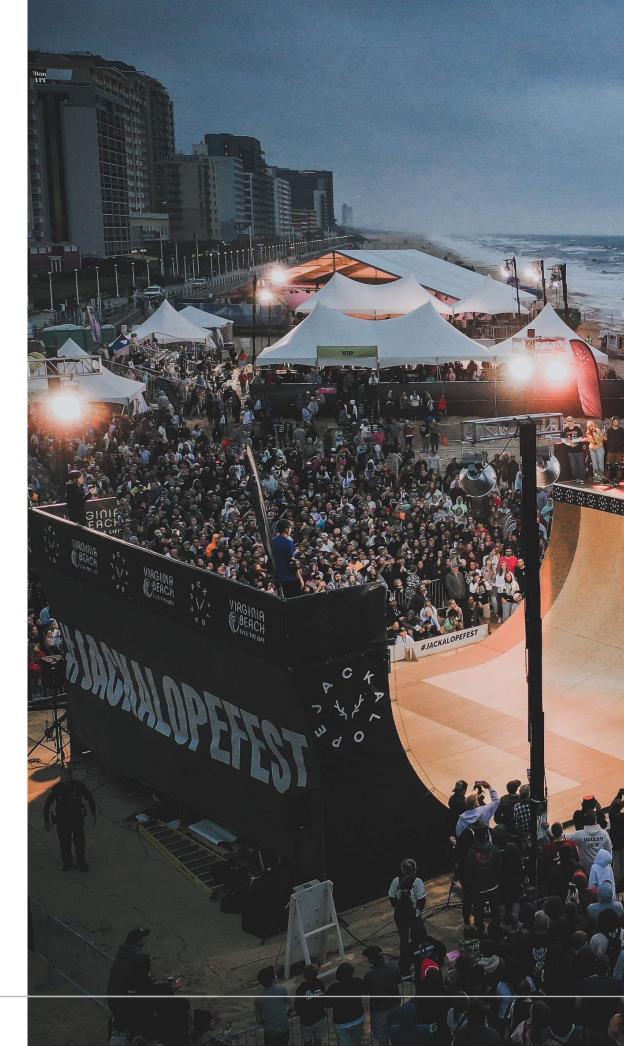
"Although her songs are impactful, Swift is an economic tour de force, too," explained Fortune back in May, noting that Tay's Eras Tour, which debuted at State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Arizona, in March 2023, "shattered records as the highest-grossing tour in history. Every city she performed at saw a boost in business, whether from retail, food and beverage, or hotel room sales."

Super-sized sporting events have similar impact: In February 2023, when the Chiefs won Super Bowl LVII at the same stadium, the local hotel industry hit the second-highest ADR and RevPAR for a host market, according to the CoStar hospitality analytics firm STR. Fandom goes beyond sports too: Last year's craze of "set-jetting" remains strong, with to Expedia's Unpack '24 trend report finding

Destinations must step up to draw such travelers. Take **Virginia Beach**, a popular oceanfront setting for more than a century that has now broadened visitation beyond sun worshipers and seasonal partiers by doubling down on music and adventure sports. Neptune City's cultural calendar now boasts music festivals spotlighting stars of pop, R&B, reggae and country, while 38 miles of sun-kissed shoreline hosts sports spectacles, from the North American Sand Soccer Championships to the Jackalope Festival, showcasing everything from skateboarding to BASE jumping, and the 62nd Annual East Coast Surfing Championships, the original and oldest competition of its kind.

"Virginia Beach has really gotten behind the transformation and attracted a lot of investment from event producers offering crowd-pleasing experiences for people to enjoy responsibly," said Robin Magrisi, vice president, who oversees the account for FINN Partners. Magrisi points to Pharrell Williams, a native son of Virginia Beach and Men's Creative Director for Louis Vuitton, whose recurring Something In The Water Festival is scheduled for October. "Pharrell brought the idea directly to city planners, and his music buddies jumped in to offer something special to do that complemented a day on the beach."

Among luxury travel providers to have taken a hint is **Seabourn.** This past spring, the ultra-luxury cruise line introduced 'The Collection,' a series of exclusive sailings featuring one-of-a-kind shoreside experiences such as sporting events, vineyard tours and cultural performances that complement what guests enjoy onboard. Set to launch on select Western Mediterranean voyages on Seabourn Venture in 2025, the series will provide breaths of fresh opportunity for tennis fans to get into the game, with two sailings between Barcelona and Rome offering overnights and premium tickets to the Monte Carlo Masters and Barcelona Open tennis tournaments.



## Vore and more, dining is becoming the central feature of hotel stays.

"As we step into 2024, the trend of transforming culinary offerings continues to gain momentum," observed Paul Coury, founder and CEO of Coury Hospitality, who ought to know. Key to the growth of the Dallas-based hospitality management firm's portfolio has been its focus on dining innovation, with offerings at 14 lifestyle hotel properties and 29 restaurants and bars across the Midwest including secretive speakeasies, lime-lit jazz clubs, and a European-style food hall with eight chef-driven restaurants serving scratch-made global cuisine.

The result? A remarkable surge in local patronage, with over 80% of diners at Coury Hospitality properties arriving from nearby. "Just as with our hotel guests, they're seeking an elevated atmosphere and culinary excellence they can trust," said Coury, noting that flipping the model to lead with culinary experiences can breathe new life into hotels. "People don't just join us to dine and depart. They're everywhere onsite, doing everything."

## **Furning Tables on Hotel Hospitality**

"When it comes to food and beverage, hotels are wise to swim against the sea of sameness, as travelers and media are no longer impressed by the welcome cocktail alone," said Cesaley Hill, associate vice president, who oversees the Coury Hospitality account for Maverick Creative. "People are looking for thoughtful and memorable experiences that become stories they share with friends, and there's nothing more personal than a dining recommendation." Hill also noted the importance of thinking big and staying true to location to grab attention. "Not just big, but bigger: It takes boldness and being a little out there to break through."

Among the many culinary experiences offered by the Santo Collection on the sun-drenched island of Santorini is incredible outdoor dining. "Now more than ever, we see travelers looking to connect with the location when they indulge in local cuisine," said Christos Seizis, Santo general manager, who points to the success of three al fresco dining concepts at Santo Pure and a strong outdoor culinary element to be featured at Santo Collection's newest property, Santo Mine, which opened this past spring.

The Tryall Club in Jamaica is putting clever spins on local ingredients at its first-ever spa. Newly opened, The Spa at Tryall plans to serve an array of dining offerings that include juice shots made from seasonal island fruits, cacao drinks mixed with the finest ceremonial cacao from Jamaica's famed Blue Mountains, and teas infused with local ginger, lemongrass and lime. Also, with an uptick in requests to bring the beauty of nature into dining, The Tryall Club offers floating breakfasts in the pool, private lunches in the garden, and scenic picnics at a secret river.

For something entirely different at mealtime, onefinestay, a leading hospitality brand offering the world's finest homes and service, is affording guests access to full-blown theatrical productions from the London-based private theatre group **Revels in Hand**. Founded by Cambridge-educated grads of Londonbased schools of dramatic arts, Revels in Hand delivers onefinestay guests the magic of private, customized theatre in the comfort of their vacation space. Michele Bayens, director of concierge at onefinestay, shares, "Whether guests are requesting out-of-the-box entertainment or private bartenders who can conduct a cocktail class while a chef creates a pairing menu, the demand for experiential dining while on vacation continues to trend."





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