

## American Express Platinum Travel Service Unveils New Trends in Private Yacht, Villa and Jet Bookings

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### Travel Specialists Report Increase in First-Time Yacht, Villa and Jet Travelers Seeking the Ultimate in Customized and Private Luxury Vacations

A growing number of affluent travelers are seeking private, luxurious getaways, booking more private yachts, villas and jets than ever before, according to the Platinum Travel Service team of specialists who are dedicated to these categories of travel, and exclusively service American Express Platinum Card(R) members. Due to the growth in customer interest and demand, these specialists, who possess in-depth knowledge and distinct expertise in each area, were brought together to form an established team that is dedicated full-time to planning and booking these vacations. Specialists reported that there has been a significant increase in first-time customers who are seeking more customized and enriching travel experiences with friends and family, in addition to frequent bookings by travelers who rent yachts and villas numerous times per year. These travelers are looking to spend less time planning, packing, and transporting, specialists say, and more time indulging and immersing in the destinations and experiences with loved ones.

"Now, more than ever, affluent travelers want luxurious experiences tailored to their own specific needs, filled with special amenities and services that enhance and add value to the vacation experience," said Audrey Hendley, vice president of American Express Travel. "Whether our specialists are customizing private yacht charters in the Caribbean or booking private villas in the South of France, we are delivering unique experiences for our customers that are personal and unforgettable."

#### **Trends in Villas: The Dream Home Away from Home**

Platinum Travel Service villa specialists report that the requests for private villas are at an all-time high, especially from multi-generational families or groups of friends looking for privacy, space and a "home away from home" with additional comforts. These include personal gourmet chefs and housekeeping staff, private pool and beach areas, extra space for family and friends, and close proximity to a nearby town or city where they can enjoy the local shopping and dining scene, as well as the local culture by way of culinary/wine tours and historical experiences.

Specialists report that Italy, France and the Caribbean - particularly St. Barts - are among the most popular destinations for private villa vacations, which, like private yachts, are often six-night/seven-day vacations booked six to nine months in advance. A broad selection of private houses and villa rentals appeal to these travelers, ranging from three-bedroom cottages to a 42-room mansion, depending on the travelers' needs. Increasingly, specialists are also making plans for travelers' pets, arranging their transport to the destination and ensuring their comfort at the villa itself.

#### **Floating Oases: Trends in Yacht Vacations**

According to Platinum Travel Service yacht specialists, the Caribbean, France and Italy are among the top port areas for yacht vacations, which are often six-night/seven-day getaways and booked six to nine months in advance. These private yacht charters are becoming increasingly popular especially among couples of all ages looking for romantic and peaceful escapes. Groups of friends and multi-generational families are also booking more than ever before, looking to reconnect and spend quality time doing the things they love to do. One specialist recently arranged a yacht vacation in the Western Riviera for an extended family of 24 starting in Monte Carlo, stopping and ending in Lucca, Italy, where the family spent a week in a private villa.

According to the specialists, these travelers are looking to escape with their friends and family to an environment that offers the utmost in comfort, privacy, and caters to their every need and desire. Repeat customers often have a favorite yacht or yachts that they prefer booking on a consistent basis, which is often determined by size and the benefits and services available on the yacht, such as on-board chefs, butlers and housekeeping. Often, these travelers bring their own private chefs, nannies or assistants to add to their comfort and relaxation.

#### **Trends in Jet-Setting Experiences**

Platinum Travel Service jet specialists are seeing an increase in private jet travel for purely leisure vacations and these travelers are younger in age than they were in the past. They also continue to book jets for business travelers seeking greater convenience and flexibility, especially when tacking on personal vacation time following a business trip.

Private jets are becoming central to the vacation itself, especially for families. Jet specialists are increasingly booking private jet charters for customers to hop from city to city within European countries and Asia. One family recently booked a private jet charter within China to experience a 12-day private tour of four cities during the trip. For on-land activities during these jet tours, specialists are coordinating private viewings, private dinners, and private art gallery tours, enabling the families to enrich their travel experiences in a close and personal manner.

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