

WISH we were THERE

Where do members of the trade dream of visiting once travel restrictions are lifted? **Hollie-Rae Brader** finds out

With travel on hold and the country at home, it's only natural that we've all started dreaming of our future escapades. Many of us in the travel industry have had trips postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak and many more are actively plotting future adventures – perhaps using lockdown as a time to plan detailed itineraries to far-flung places. Some are keen to return to their favourite boltholes; others to start ticking places off their bucket lists. From Greece to the Galápagos, Devon to Walt Disney World, suppliers and agents tell us about their wish-list destinations.



STEVE WILLIAMS
DIRECTOR OF SALES, MSC CRUISES

An Asian adventure is on the cards for Williams, who has already booked his next big trip with his husband and their best friends – Loose Women's Carol McGiffin and her husband – to Penang in Malaysia, Hanoi in Vietnam and Hua Hin in Thailand.

Williams says: "My first trip post-Covid was always going to be Asia – anyone who knows me well knows of my huge love for Asia. We always travel with our best friends, Carol and Mark, and this time will be no exception. It will be even more precious as we haven't been able to see them during lockdown. It wouldn't be a trip to Asia without a few nights in vibrant Bangkok (pictured). We have friends in the city and always have great fun partying into the night, sipping cold Singha beers and eating delicious street food. By day, we tend to crash by the pool on the banks of the Chao Praya River."



MARK DUGUID
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
CARRIER

It isn't a bucket-list adventure that Duguid craves the most – it's his annual trip to Greece. He's due to travel this summer and has his fingers crossed he'll be able to take the island-hopping trip.

"Each year, we visit new islands, and it's the annual holiday I cherish most," he says.

"Amorgos (pictured) and Astypalaia are earmarked for this year. These islands are off the beaten track and have a short season so, should my trip go ahead, visiting and spending my cash in the few local tavernas and bakeries is sure to take on extra resonance."

ANDY HARMER
SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT OF MEMBERSHIP AND UK DIRECTOR, CLIA

Harmer says the current circumstances have underlined how special travel is. "We have to seize the day and my intention is to move some trips from my bucket list to my to-do list," he says.

"High on that list is the Galápagos – everyone tells me how special it is, with unique wildlife and scenery, plus the chance to experience somewhere different to anywhere else on the planet. On the way, I'd love to discover some of South America. I have been fascinated by the different cultures on display on the BBC series *Race Across the World*, and having explored Peru, I would love to see more countries, more cities and have more experiences."



PRITI MEHTA
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF
SALES, OCEANIA CRUISES

Oceania Cruises' Mehta is keen to retrace her family's footsteps on a trip to Uganda.

"I had planned to travel there as part of my big birthday celebration, but sadly for many reasons this has been put on hold," she says.

"It's where I was born and where I grew up listening to my parents talking about places, landmarks and adventures they had growing up there.

"Of course, being able to see gorillas in their natural habitat has been on my bucket list too. I've focused so many of my travel plans around being able to see wildlife, yet ironically have never been on a safari. For me, a trip to Uganda would be personal – an opportunity to follow in my parents' footsteps and see places through their eyes."

MARK SWORDS
OWNER, SWORDS TRAVEL

The owner of the London travel agency is keen to get travelling once safe to do so. "Lockdown has given us time to plan and already we've got some highlights for the latter part of the year," he says.

"First, we will be heading to Miami for a five-night cruise with Virgin Voyages, incorporating Costa Maya and the Bahamas. Plus, I've always wanted to stay at Faena Hotel in Miami, so this will be our post-cruise stay.

"Then in December, Stu [Swords, his husband] and I will be heading to Australia for a month.

"We plan to go to Hamilton Island to stay at Qualia (pictured) – each time we go to Oz we try to tick off another luxury lodge."





CRAIG DAVIDSON, GENERAL MANAGER TRADE SALES, JET2.COM AND JET2HOLIDAYS

It's an "annual pilgrimage" to Cancun that tops Davidson's wish list. He'd been due to travel to the Mexican hotspot at Easter to mark his two-year wedding anniversary.

"I'll be returning to Excellence Playa Mujeres in Cancun as soon as possible," he says. "This has been an annual pilgrimage after peaks for the past 10 years and it's the place where Gemma [Pinder-Davidson, of If Only] and I got married in 2018."

And if Mexico isn't an immediate possibility when travel resumes, Davidson says he would be happy to be "on the first plane to anywhere" for a much-needed break.



JOHN SULLIVAN, HEAD OF COMMERCIAL, ADVANTAGE TRAVEL PARTNERSHIP

A visit to his home-from-home in Ibiza is Sullivan's biggest travel wish. He had several trips planned and is still hoping to get to the party island this year.

"Our next trip will be to Ibiza (pictured) as we have a place there," he says. "We had been due to go over Easter and both May bank holidays, and none of those trips are happening now. We can't wait to get back to our favourite beach clubs and restaurants and all the people we've met over the years. We're due back in August and really hoping it will happen."



CHRIS REDFERN, PARTNERSHIPS MANAGER, ITC TRAVEL GROUP

Redfern has used his time in lockdown to book a trip for 2021 – he'll be taking his nine-year-old daughter, Chloe Ann, to Walt Disney World Resort in Florida in February half-term.

"We're both going to run the 5km Disney Princess race as it's something she has really wanted to do – hence the decision for us to travel there in February," he says.

But his plans don't stop there. He adds: "I am planning on booking a few nights away – possibly to Cyprus or the Canaries – through my local agent, as soon as we get the green light to travel."



ROB KENTON, OWNER, TRIANGLE TRAVEL

Trips to Belgium and Thailand are high on Kenton's wish list.

"Since the start of lockdown, I have dreamt of jumping in the car and heading to Ghent (pictured). It's only an hour and a half drive from Calais, so great for a weekend break. I would start the day with an amazing breakfast at the Pillows Grand Hotel Reylof and then head on a walk to the medieval castle.

"Once the sun is over the yardarm, it would be time for a Belgian beer in one of the bars along the canal banks."

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Kate Fenton, trade manager, Tourism New Zealand

"I'm dreaming of being on the south coast [of England], given the good weather we've been having. I discovered paddleboarding on a fam trip to New Zealand a few years ago, and I've been hooked ever since. Going for a paddle will be the first thing I do post-lockdown."

Derek Jones

UK managing director, Kuoni

"I was due to go to South Africa with the family – the full safari, Garden Route, winelands and Cape Town itinerary – over Easter. We've been promising ourselves the trip for years and finally got round to booking it, then it was scuppered by lockdown. As soon as this is over, we'll be booking again."

Helen Dooley

owner, More Travel

"During the lockdown I've booked a Virgin Voyages cruise to Miami, visiting Puerto Plata and Bimini Beach Club, in October. I'm still praying that we'll get our usual family holiday in the Dordogne, in France, in July, but I'm not convinced."

Jeanne Lally, joint managing director, The Travel Bureau

"We are planning a multigenerational holiday in a fabulous villa with the biggest swimming pool in Andalusia for 10 nights at least – or maybe a month!"

Shirley Brooke, director of leisure sales, GP Associates

"Top of the list for me will be to go to Dublin and see my mum, dad and brother. We will have a meal at the Merrion Hotel in Dublin and drinks in the Cellar Bar. Being separated from family is the saddest part of this crisis – a Zoom call just doesn't do it!"



SARAH WEETMAN, HEAD OF SALES, JUST YOU AND TRAVELSPHERE

Celebrating a "special birthday" this year, Weetman is keen to revisit one of her favourite holiday spots – Kalkan in Turkey.

"I can't wait for the world to travel again," she says. "One of the first places I'm looking forward to visiting is Kalkan (pictured). I visited for the first time last year with a group of girlfriends and instantly fell in love with this quaint little town. I can already imagine how our days will be spent – exploring the windy streets, buying local trinkets, relaxing at the beach clubs and taking a dip in the sea. Of course, we'd share a bottle of rosé over lunch! Being in Kalkan with my friends is one of the happiest memories I have, and I can't wait to recreate it again soon."

CLARE LEVY, OWNER, DIFFERENT PLANET TRAVEL

When asked where she'd like to go once travel resumes, Levy says she would feel "like a kid in a candy shop who had been denied sweets for weeks and told I can have anything I like".

"I have been dreaming of a beautiful property in Lecce called La Fiermontina," she says. "It was already top of my list in Italy before this started and even more so now. Italy has long been an absolute favourite of mine and to see it hit so hard is soul-destroying, so number one on my long list is to visit Lecce (pictured)."

Levy is also craving family fun and has postponed a trip to Princessa Yaiza in Lanzarote until next year.



LISA FITZELL, MANAGING DIRECTOR, ELEGANT RESORTS

After postponing an Easter trip to California, Fitzell hopes to be able to go later this year.

"We're planning to explore San Francisco, go on a bike ride across the Golden Gate Bridge, taste wines in Napa Valley, visit Lake Tahoe, hike in Yosemite and stay at Rush Creek Lodge nestled in the woods," she says. "Carmel is also firmly on the itinerary, with a stay at the incredible Carmel Valley Ranch, and whale watching. We will finish in beautiful Santa Monica with a night at the iconic Shutters on the Beach to end the trip in style."

