

EVENTS

Premier Tennis and Virgin Group rally for charity

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Necker Cup tennis

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Travel and events group Premier Tennis is serving an ace for charity with the world's "most exclusive" tennis match.

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Sponsors of the 4th annual Necker Cup Pro-Am, which begins this weekend and features charity tennis matches and numerous other activities, include Rolls-Royce Dom Perignon, Buckitdream, Ernst Benz and Inglot. The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity coupled with travel and philanthropy will attract eager participants and raise money for a number of good causes.

"The Necker Cup is not only dubbed as 'The World's Most Exclusive Tennis Event,' but the most fun too," said Trevor Short, co-founder of the Necker Cup and co-founder and president of Premier Tennis Group. "It's a bit of healthy competition, particularly when it's in the name of good fun, which is exactly what the Necker Cup is all about."

"On top of all the tennis action, the event also boasts a lot of bonding, relaxation and exciting activities," he said. "Guests can take part in paddle boarding, zip lining, massage therapy, beach tennis, sail boat races, kite surfing, wake boarding, snorkeling and amazing food, live music, parties and more are there, while enjoying time on Sir Richard Branson's private island, Necker. The mood is always celebratory!"

Charitable aces

The 4th Annual Necker Cup Pro-Am, taking place from Nov. 28 to Dec. 3 on Virgin Group founder Sir Richard Branson's Necker Island, situated amongst the British Virgin Islands, will pit 16 professional tennis players alongside 16 amateurs. In its first three years, the Premier Tennis Group-organized Necker Cup has garnered a total of \$2.5 million charitable donations.

This year will see professional players such as Boris Becker, Marion Bartoli, Tracy Austin and many more joined by actress/model Charlotte McKinney, actor/comedian Chevy Chase and Grammy-winner Jewel.



Necker Cup group

"The pull of celebrity is a critical element in making the Necker Cup such a successful event each year," Mr. Short said. "We strive to generate interest from celebrities and professionals from the extensive networking we do and aim to attract well-known tennis stars and fun, entertaining celebrities for our guests to enjoy."

Necker Cup's six-day tournament offers attendees a chance to play alongside and against some of tennis' finest. An all-inclusive package will run \$110,000 per couple, but the dinner parties, beauties of Necker Island and time spent alongside Sir Branson and tennis pros not to mention the emotional rewards of charitable contributions will last a lifetime.



Necker Cup sailing

"Over the years, some of the world's most successful entrepreneurs and CEOs have attended the event," Mr. Short said. "Many people not only come for the tennis and fun but also for the incredible networking."

The event will climax on Dec. 2 with a tennis exhibition, a live charity auction and an "End of the World Party" with DJ Mehow and Grammy-winner Sean Paul. Promises of celebrity-filled exclusive events with a charitable spin will likely pique the interest of high-net worth travelers.



Legends Tennis Camp

For those looking for a lower price point, the concurrent "Legends Tennis Camp," equally full of tennis players on the neighboring Little Dix Bay is available for \$13,000. Entrance to the End of the World Party is included.

Grand slam

The Necker Cup capitalizes on a number of trends in travel, from the want of specific local experience to the urge to volunteer or otherwise engage in philanthropy.

Traveling is an increasingly popular way for people to give back, and hotel brands must stay on top of the trend to maintain their status as the best in the business.

A recent study by Tours.com found that an astonishing 55 percent of America-based travelers partook in volunteer work during a vacation within the past two years, with almost three quarters calling their charitable donations or philanthropic endeavors "important," "very important" or "extremely important." As "voluntourism" becomes increasingly common, brands must show that they care equally and assist travelers in partaking in volunteer work or gifting to maintain status and image ([see story](#)).

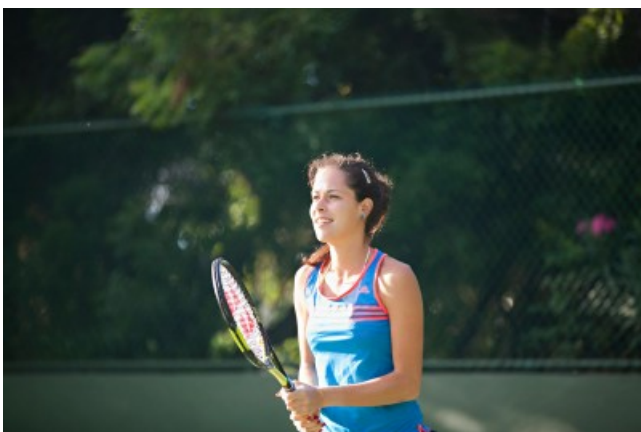


Necker Cup tennis match

Additionally, the experience of the Necker Cup provides a way for consumers to donate to charity while also indulging the desire for exclusive experiences.

Increasingly, affluent consumers are foregoing luxury goods for travel, with 80 percent choosing an experience over an item, according to a recent report from Martini Media.

"The Martini Report, Volume 4: The Affluent Traveler" found that even from the year-ago, affluent consumers are 50 percent more willing to spend on leisure activities, and surprisingly, more women are interested in exploring than men. As one of the primary drivers of the luxury market, travel and hospitality brands can leverage this information to continue programming curated experiences for affluent guests in response to their behavior and preferences ([see story](#)).



Necker Cup tennis

"The Necker Cup is such a unique experience and draws numerous individuals/attendees from around the world who are dedicated to helping others and making a difference in our world," Mr. Short said.

"It's not all just in the name of great fun and quality tennis," he said. "The Necker Cup is held to raise much-needed funds for a number of good causes. Every year, charities like Virgin Unite, National Tennis Foundation and the designated charities of the players, benefit from the money raised through the Cup and its live auction."

Final Take

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