

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Private jet travelers split on where 2020 will end up: survey

March 23, 2020



*Private jet travel may take a hit this year over the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, but the patrons are a resilient bunch*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Contrary to many media reports, private jet travel may take a hit this year as consumers batten hatches with the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

In a new survey conducted March 17-19, as of last week, subscribers of [Private Jet Card Comparisons](#) who averaged 111 private jet flight hours in 2019 are split on where 2020 will end up, with about a third forecasting a decrease, a third saying private flights will increase, and a third expect private travel to be flat.

"Prior to COVID-19, 45 percent of those surveyed had expected flight hours to increase, 49 percent believed they would be flat, and only 6 percent expected a decline," said Doug Gollan, founder and editor in chief of Private Jet Card Comparisons, Miami, FL.

### Super size

Per the survey, while 39 percent said they had canceled trips due to COVID-19, 36 percent said they made unplanned trips, mainly relocating family members and bringing kids home as colleges closed.

Looking at the next 90 days, they expect most private travel to be mainly to second homes (45 percent), relocating family members (46 percent) and making critical business trips (35 percent).

Also, 13 percent said they expect to charter a super-yacht or rent a private villa, compared to 19 percent who say they expect to stay in a hotel or resort.

"The key is yachts and villas, a rarified market, are tracking close to normal, while hotels and resorts is significantly lower than past surveys," Mr. Gollan said.

Private Jet Card Comparisons is an independent buyer's guide to jet cards and private aviation membership programs. Subscribers pay \$250 annually for access to the guide that compares 250-plus different programs by more than 65 variables, enabling them to identify the programs that best fit their needs.

Last year, subscribers spent an estimated \$100 million in jet cards and membership programs.

## Flights of fancy

The survey found many respondents have multiple private aviation solutions with jet cards (70 percent), on-demand charter (44 percent) and full ownership (24 percent) followed by friends' planes (16 percent), fractional ownership (13 percent) and aircraft owned by a company for which they work (6 percent).

Sixty-one percent of respondents have yet to cancel any trips they would have flown privately because of COVID-19 versus 39 percent who have canceled a trip.

Canceled business meetings were most mentioned, as well as international vacations.

The response to summer vacation trips where respondents' would fly via private jet was interesting.

Only 3 percent of respondents said plans were canceled and unlikely to change even if things get better.

Forty-eight percent said plans are continuing, subject to change, 29 percent said plans were canceled for now but may reconsider later, and 20 percent said plans may switch but will take a summer vacation one way or another.

WHAT WOULD most likely influence their private jet travel in the next six months?

Seventy-seven percent of respondents said reducing potential exposure from COVID-19 will influence private aviation in the next six months compared to 22 percent who cited concerns about personal assets or company sales and profits versus the cost of flying privately.

"The biggest concern of readers is what steps are companies taking in regards to extra cleaning procedures and what they are doing to minimize exposure to COVID-19 for their employees and flight crews," Mr. Gollan said.

"Because there is so much uncertainty, private jet companies should focus on the ability to guarantee access on short notice at fixed rates, so consumers don't need to worry about surge pricing," he said. "They may also want to consider short-term memberships or options that allow new customers to buy in at lower thresholds."