

IN-STORE

Four Seasons partners with private jet provider for world tour package

September 28, 2012



By TRICIA CARR

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is raising awareness of its global properties to the most affluent travelers through a world tour package in partnership with jet provider TCS & Starquest Expeditions.

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The chain is offering its third 22-day world tour package after its inaugural two packages sold out, this time tapping consumers' adventurous side. The brand is leveraging its tours by inviting writers on the trip to document and share the experience via Four Seasons' digital channels.

“Around-the-world trips by private jet have been offered for many years, but in the past five years if they were offered, it was low profile because of the backlash against opulent consumption,” said Karen Weiner Escalera, president and chief strategist at **KWE Partners**, Miami. “Now, it is significant that it is once again acceptable to offer this kind of hyper-luxury, and people are obviously buying.

“It is also interesting to note that bloggers were invited as guests on this pricey journey,” she said. “It shows how far they have come in influence and clout.”

Ms. Escalera is not affiliated with Four Seasons, but agreed to comment as an industry

expert.

Four Seasons was not available for comment before press deadline.

Hello world

Four Seasons' 2013 world tour departs Sept. 14 from Seattle. Travelers return Oct. 5.

Guests will participate in tailored experiences at each destination. Stops include Seattle, WA; Tokyo; Hangzhou, China; Shanghai; The Maldive islands; Istanbul; St. Petersburg; Marrakech, Morocco; and New York.

Travelers will stay exclusively at the brand's hotels during the trip including the new Four Seasons Hotel Lion Palace, St. Petersburg, and Four Seasons Hotel Pudong, Shanghai.



Four Seasons Hotel Pudong, Shanghai

Activities include visits to Asakusa and the Sensoji Temple in Tokyo, Dragon Well tea plantation in Hangzhou, the blue lagoons of the Maldives, Grand Bazaar in Istanbul, markets in Marrakech and a gala dinner in New York.

Guests can also choose personalized excursions at each stop.

The world tour is run by the air crew, expedition managers, luggage handlers, physician, chef and on-board Four Seasons concierge. Guests can make arrangements for each tour stop through the staff members.

TCS & Starquest Expeditions will fly guests in a Boeing 757 jet. It will provide a 1:5 crew-traveler ratio.



Boeing 757

Also, art historian, lecturer and writer Charles Doherty and photographer Bob Krist will accompany guests on the 2013 world tour and share information about each destination on the plane.

Guests will also be given iPads that show content relevant to the tour.

Meanwhile, guests are set to depart on Four Seasons' first world tour Sept. 30.

The brand invited guest bloggers Adam H. Graham and Rachelle Lucas to record the experiences and share them via blog posts, videos, photos and tweets. For example, consumers can follow the journey through the bloggers' Twitter handles @adamhgraham and @travelbloggr, hashtag #FSJet and Four Seasons' online magazine at <http://magazine.fourseasons.com>.

Mr. Graham and Ms. Lucas will also accompany guests on the second world tour starting Oct. 29.

It is likely that Four Seasons will continue its digital trip documentation for future world tours which could help the brand to naturally tell a story to its fans.

Match made in the heavens

Other high-end hotels are partnering with private jet providers to bolster their services.

For example, Four Seasons Resort Nevis and Magellan Jets partnered to market a Caribbean flight and hotel package to affluent travelers that corresponded with Nevis Island's Culturama festival.

The hotel package included a private flight and a four-night stay in a suite ([see story](#)).

In addition, Flexjet is giving its owners exclusive offers under a partnership with Lake Austin Spa Resort in Austin, TX, that could stir up interest among locals for both Texas-based brands.

Flexjet's fractional jet owners can now receive room upgrades based on availability, a \$100 spa credit and enrollment in the resort's Monarch Club ([see story](#)).

Also, PlaneClear partnered with high-end travel company In The Know Experiences to offer consumers a package for the 2012 London Olympics that included a private jet flight, five-night hotel stay in London and access to the most sought-after sporting event this year ([see story](#)).

Affluent consumers could be more apt to purchase a package that is inclusive of all services from reputable companies.

Also, luxury hotels and private jet providers can offer a package to their lists of high-net-worth consumers, so these efforts will have a large reach among target consumers.

The more brands increase their exclusivity factor with these packages, the more they can leverage their services to the correct consumers.

"This offering resonates with affluent travelers' desire for memorable, once-in-a-lifetime

experiences,” Ms. Escalera said.

“The implication by association is that Four Seasons offers unique opportunities for destination experiences and a stay in one of the hotels is in itself an experience,” she said.

Final Take

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