


Robb Report

MOTORS / AVIATION

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Private Jet Companies Are Teaming With Luxe Hotels, Yacht Charters and More to Woo Covid-Wary Travelers

Aviation firms now collaborate on a range of "door-to-door" vacations.

BY MICHAEL VERDON 



Courtesy NetJets

As the air-charter market has experienced a surge in demand over the last six months, the choices of private-jet travel have seen corresponding growth. Business-aviation companies are now forging partnerships with international resorts, yacht charter firms and other global travel providers, but other charter operators are running multi-hour "daycations." The trips range from brief, intra-regional travel to exclusive, two-week African safaris.

Tradewind Aviation and Embark Beyond have set up day trips for New Yorkers to places like Blantyre, a Tudor-style country house in Lenox, Mass., in the heart of the Berkshires, with a flight to Pittsfield, access to a BMWx7 for a day exploring the fall foliage, and throwing in a gourmet picnic lunch prepared by Daniel Boulud's Café Boulud at Blantyre.

The partners offer similar day trips to Miraval spa and resort, also in the Berkshires, a day on the Delaware River in New Hope, Penn., and a food and wine excursion to Charlottesville, Va., that culminates in an eight-course tasting meal at the Inn at Little Washington, which has three Michelin stars. Tradewind says it will be launching daycation experiences from Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Dallas and Miami.



Blantyre Estate in the Berkshires is the setting of a "daycation" offered for New York-based travelers who want to see fall foliage without overnighting.

Courtesy Blantyre

JL Bar Ranch, Resort & Spa in Texas, a remote luxury ranch on 13,000 acres, is also wooing Covid-wary travelers who want to avoid busy holiday destinations, offering horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking, and culinary class. JL doesn't have any air partners, but it does have its own private airport for seamless access. The resort is also taking Covid-19 precautions, such as screening temperatures at the entrance, sanitizing the facilities and requiring the wearing of masks.

Tradewind is also partnering with the recently reopened Eden Rock hotel in St. Barths to offer a "door-to-door" experience in three of the resort's villas, including the possibility of using a Land Rover Defender during the stay.

NetJets has formed a similar relationship with The Ocean Club, a Four Seasons resort on Paradise Island in the Bahamas, which has three- to four-bedroom villas. The company is targeting travelers for Thanksgiving and Christmas packages. The world's largest fractional provider has made a similar arrangement with the Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo, which will be opening November 12. The property has 20 new private retreat units to promote privacy.



Private airports, like this one in Texas, offers a more Covid-protected experience for travelers who want to avoid crowded holiday destinations. Courtesy JL Bar Ranch

Similar regional air provider-resort partnerships include the Eden Roc Cap Cana in the Dominican Republic and Helidosa, a helicopter charter firm, and California-based Schubach Aviation with the Waldorf Astoria Los Cabos Pedregal, which is also offering holiday packages.

Moving beyond regions, VistaJet's new Private World is a global service aimed at ultra-high-net worth individuals in which the business-jet firm connects to private islands, residences, ski destinations and yacht charters. The concept is that the company flies its clients to the areas—both popular and offbeat destinations—with no check-in process and preferred services already set up.

"Our selection of partners is inspired by the desire to protect, preserve and promote the highest know-how of the best hospitality services," said Matteo Atti, VistaJet's executive vice president of marketing, noting the program is the start of a "radical transformation" at the top end of travel.



A growing number of resorts like the Four Seasons Ocean Club on Paradise Island in the Bahamas are partnering with regional air charter firms to provide door-to-door service.
Courtesy Christian Horan

Other partners are returning to exotic vacations. “Roar Africa Emirates Greatest Safari On Earth” is a 12-day trip where travelers enjoy a private suite aboard an Emirates Executive private jet and stay at exclusive-use lodges, along with specialist guides, conservationists and historians who will give “insider knowledge,” during the trip across Africa, with visits to Kenya and Rwanda, among others.

“This experience is without a doubt the answer to seeing the most iconic destinations in Africa all at once in the safest possible way, with the lowest contact and highest touch—in a post-Covid world,” said Deborah Calmeyer, Roar Africa’s executive director.