

YOUR JOURNEY BEGINS WITH US

VIRTUOSO LIFE

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THE YEAR OF
TRAVELING
FAR



WHERE WE'RE GOING IN 2022

London Calling

A report from a whirlwind weekend to kick-start travel to the UK.

BY IANTHE BUTT



London aglow and (below) Virtuoso CEO Matthew D. Upchurch receiving a salute from the Band of the Coldstream Guards, the oldest regiment in the British Army.



RECENTLY, A GROUP OF U.S. AND Canadian Virtuoso advisors headed to the English capital to celebrate the reopening of tourism. “London and the UK are ready to welcome back U.S. visitors, and we want to show people that testing is straightforward, and how few restrictions are in place,” says Nicola Butler of NoteWorthy, the Virtuoso on-site tour connection that organized the event.

Advisors stayed at hotels in the Virtuoso portfolio and were treated to a host of impressive experiences that would be inaccessible for anyone but a Virtuoso traveler. Thanks to NoteWorthy’s 35 years of creating insider travel experiences and Butler’s unrivaled personal relationships throughout Great Britain, the group enjoyed

highlights such as a private viewing of Princess Diana’s wedding dress at Kensington Palace; meeting the VIHs (Very Important Horses) of the Household Cavalry at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park; an intimate performance by the stars of the hit West End musical *Six*; and an address from His Royal Highness the Earl of Wessex, underlining the importance of U.S.-UK travel.

“Our advisors are not just influencers, they’re impactors,” says Virtuoso chairman and CEO Matthew D. Upchurch, who also attended. “When they come and experience a destination, they go back and inspire others to travel there by sharing their firsthand experience.” Here are a few of their tips and takeaways from the weekend.

THE 2022 MINDSET “Now’s the time to splurge on a special experience. There’s no better revenge travel moment than getting a play-by-play explanation of the pomp and ceremony behind the Changing of the Guard, from within the barracks.”

— *Henley Vazquez, New York City*

HOTEL HOPPING “London is a city of distinct neighborhoods with iconic hotels in each area: the Corinthia, in the heart of history near Whitehall; The Savoy, overlooking the Thames; or Claridge’s, The Connaught, Brown’s Hotel, and The Langham, for easy access to Mayfair’s fine dining and galleries.

“London is a magical place, and the magic that travel advisors can make happen for our guests through our personal connections stands above the rest.”

– Malaka Hilton, Sarasota, Florida



VIP access and the people who make it happen, from top: Executives from Virtuoso host hotels and NoteWorthy, working the phones in the Churchill War Rooms, Princess Diana's wedding dress at Kensington Palace, and behind the scenes with the Household Cavalry at the Mandarin Oriental Hyde Park.



There's Four Seasons at Park Lane, 45 Park Lane, and The Dorchester, just moments from Hyde Park; The Berkeley and Mandarin Oriental for Harrods and Buckingham Palace; the Shangri-La – inside The Shard – close to Borough Market; and Rosewood London ideally placed for Covent Garden.”

– Debbie Bush, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

“Hoteliers in London are not just service focused, they're curators of British history. At the Savoy we had a sneak first look at the Royal Suite, which has been transformed by Gucci and Christie's to celebrate the fashion house's centenary year. Who knew that founder Guccio Gucci was once employed at the Savoy as a luggage porter?”

– Vanessa McGovern, Mooresville, North Carolina



VIP EXPERIENCES “We visited Charing Cross station with a renowned underground historian to tour closed-to-the-public platforms used for MI5 training and movies such as *Skyfall* and *The Bourne Ultimatum* – truly unique.”

– Craig Bush, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania

“Bypassing the crowds and having the chance to sit behind the glass in Winston Churchill's chair is unforgettable. On one arm of the chair, you can feel grooves from where he tapped his ring. Whether you're a history buff, an Anglophile, or a fan of VIP treatment, it's a must.”

– Diane Sherer, La Jolla, California



“You can take your kids to visit Shakespeare's Globe, set foot on a replica ship that circumnavigated the earth in 1577, and touch the Roman wall all in one morning. With our insider knowledge, we unlock access to touch, understand, and explore history and the lasting heritage found in London.”

– Stephanie Fisher, Key Largo, Florida VI