



Much of the World Now Open to Travelers

As the world reopens to vacation travelers, I see a growing number of people moving trips from their *Travel Bucket List* to their *To Do Now List* and reserving multiple trips for the year ahead. In fact, half a dozen clients now hold reservations for three or four international trips in the next dozen months.

At the same time, major cruise lines seeing the CDC pull back from overly restrictive COVID guidelines have adjusted health protocols that make wearing masks optional in most public venues onboard. Yet, guests still need to present a negative COVID test taken within two days of boarding and complete a health questionnaire.

I believe the new rapid COVID tests, designed to be self-administered at home under remote supervision, should make getting ready to travel much easier with results of an Antigen test available 15 minutes and now accepted by many travel providers. One of my clients recently used such a test prior to boarding a flight from Europe to America, which still requires pre-travel COVID testing for returning citizens and international visitors.

Most cruise lines expect to have their ships back in full operation by early summer and, with more than a dozen new ships introduced in the past year, competition appears to be holding prices in check – at least for now. Meanwhile, I see cruise enthusiasts increasingly opt for longer itineraries, upgraded accommodations and pre- or post-cruise land extensions at a much higher rate than previously.



With a growing number of European countries reducing or eliminating COVID protocols entirely, the Continent will be the primary destination for international land travel in 2022, with the United Kingdom, Italy and Greece attracting many of my clients. Finding the best air itineraries for peak season travel to Europe this summer has already become increasingly difficult. I also anticipate air-

line ticket prices to escalate in the months ahead with fuel prices up substantially from two years ago.

The leisure travel hiatus of the past two years afforded many industry companies an opportunity to innovate their existing travel products, introduce new ships, open new hotel properties and announce a nostalgic return to rail travel.

After more than 45 years since the original Orient Express ceased operating, a French-Italian partnership will relaunch the luxury iconic train as the *Orient Express 'La Dolce Vita'* in 2023. The partners plan six different trains operating across 14 Italian regions and three international routes with more than 10,000 miles of rail lines. Reservations for one-to-three-night itineraries open this summer.

I plan to board Celebrity Apex Saturday for a 7-night Eastern Caribbean itinerary to experience this innovative ship firsthand. I also want to feel what cruising is like in an increasingly post-COVID environment. I will include information about both subjects in my next newsletter. In the meantime, stay happy and healthy!

Yours in Travel,

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