

Berlin – an upcoming destination for luxury travel

The Virtuoso network investigates market for luxury holidays in Berlin / Current figures: Spending by international tourists in Berlin reached new record highs in 2013

Berlin, April 29, 2014 Berlin has continued to establish itself as a destination for luxury travel. From 26 to 29 April approximately 500 participants in the "Virtuoso" Symposium were guests in Berlin to inform themselves about the city's offers for the upmarket travel sector. For the first time ever, the world's leading association of international luxury tour operators has held its annual symposium in the German capital.

"We are delighted to have won the Virtuoso Symposium for Berlin," says **Burkhard Kieker**, CEO of *visitBerlin*. Affluent visitors are a tourist group that is rapidly growing in the city, and thanks to the Virtuoso network, we are able to reach them all over the world. Virtuoso will attract many more international visitors to whom we can prove: Berlin offers everything that the discerning luxury traveler is looking for."

During the last four days, the city has presented itself as a destination to the international representatives of the luxury travel industry from 38 countries. The Rocco Forte Hotel de Rome, KaDeWe department store and The Ritz-Carlton, The Regent and the Adlon Kempinski hotels were among the attractions which showcased their attraction for the upmarket target group.

Matthew D. Upchurch, Chairman and CEO of Virtuoso Network, draws a positive balance: "Berlin has been a revelation for many Symposium attendees and those familiar with the city are enjoying the opportunity to experience it in a more exclusive way. With its art and culture, intriguing venues and world-class cuisine, Berlin has been an ideal location to bring together the 500+ travel executives and suppliers who joined us this week. Currently Berlin accounts for 46 percent of our hotel sales to Germany and I am certain that will increase as we share our experience with our clients."

Affluent international tourists in Berlin: average 327 euros per tax-free purchase

A recent survey by the financial services provider Global Blue confirmed the increased popularity of Berlin among wealthier international guests. Visitor spending in Berlin reached new levels in 2013. Chinese visitors lead the list, spending an average of 594 euros per purchase, followed by visitors from Ukraine (EUR 430) and Russia (EUR 366). Arab (EUR 331), American (EUR 338), Swiss (EUR 253) and Brazilian (EUR 241) visitor also spend freely in Berlin, mainly in the fashion, jewellery, leather goods, and electronics sectors. On average, international visitors spent EUR 327 per tax-free purchase (2012: EUR 317). Hotel guests in general in 2013 spent an average of EUR 204.70 per day for accommodation, restaurants, shopping and events.

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Press release



The number of wealthy guests in the city grew during 2013, originating mainly from the Arab Gulf States (2013: + 33.6% compared to the previous year), China (+ 21.7%) and Russia (+ 21.5%).

visitBerlin Marketing for the luxury tourist

Since 2012, *visitBerlin* has increased their marketing in the luxury segment and adjusted their offers accordingly. On the website exklusiv.visitBerlin.de, tourists can find an overview of exclusive hotels, tips on events, spas and spa services, shopping, gourmet restaurants and delicatessens, galleries and operas, private shuttles, as well as information regarding sports such as horse riding and golfing.

In addition, Berlin participates in luxury trade fairs abroad such as in Russia, Asia ("International Luxury Travel Market" in Shanghai, "Beijing International Top Personal Goods & Luxury" in Beijing), in the Arabian Gulf States, Scandinavia ("Vagabond" in Copenhagen) and Brazil ("Travel Week").

Voices of the participants via Twitter under the hashtag [#virtuososym](https://twitter.com/virtuososym)

About Virtuoso

The Virtuoso Symposium was held in Berlin for the first time ever between 26 and 29 April 2014. During the event, 500 of the most influential decision makers in the luxury travel industry gathered, the management of Virtuoso members from countries such as the USA, Canada, Brazil and Australia, as well as selected travel providers. After the close of the Symposium, the participants were invited to get to know Germany and Berlin by joining various tours. As a leading network of luxury travel industry stakeholders, Virtuoso includes over 330 agencies with more than 7,200 specialists in elite travel from 20 countries in North and South America, the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand and more than 1,250 of the world's best hotels, tour operators and top destinations. The 2013 symposium was held in Buenos Aires. www.virtuoso.com; virtuosomeetings.virtuoso.com/Symposium/2014.aspx

visitBerlin

"We know Berlin". This is the slogan the Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH, operating under the trade name *visitBerlin*, has been using since 1993 to globally advertise Berlin as a travel destination. *visitBerlin*'s Berlin Convention Office markets the German capital as a congress metropolis. Berlin, with 24.9 million overnight stays recorded in 2013, is the third most popular European tourist destination after London and Paris. The city also ranks among the top 3 as an international convention destination. As a tour operator, the public-private partnership offers hotel accommodation and also issues the official tourist ticket, the Berlin WelcomeCard. *visitBerlin* also operates five Berlin Tourist Information points. The Berlin Service Centre (Tel +49-30-25 00 25) is a resource for the complete range of tourist services in the city. The website visitBerlin.de offers information on the German capital in 13 languages. Additional information may be found under exclusive.visitBerlin.com

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