

HUE & CRY

2024

*Cause a stir*

TRENDS REPORT

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WHAT WILL IMPACT PEOPLE'S CHOICES IN FOOD, DRINK & TRAVEL?

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# INTRODUCTION

2023 has tested the mettle of almost every global industry. Another year of turbulence has seen economic trials, such as rising inflation and cost of living crises, combined with political instability and multiple conflicts to create a challenging backdrop for commerce. All on a planet that's continuing to rise in temperature, as experienced by millions of travellers this summer and beyond. Consumers are concerned about their health, climate change and their budgets, all of which continue to influence their decisions and tastes.

In spite of all this, there's every reason to be optimistic. Research shows us that the pleasures of food, drink, and travel, rather than being relegated

to the backburner, have become all the more precious. Consumers are eager to squeeze ever more value from their expenditures, seeking elevated experiences, enhanced quality and exciting twists on what they already know and love. This sets the scene for innovation and creativity on a whole new scale, with 2024 slated to be a banner year for brands that are bringing fresh ideas and unique propositions to the table.

In this report, we'll cover a range of themes that we expect to influence consumer behaviour in 2024, sharing key insights from experts and showing how brands can use them to offer consumers exactly what they want – before they even know they want it.

# KEY THEMES

1

## Investment grade experiences

Against a backdrop of climate change, health concerns, and the rising cost of living, one would be forgiven for thinking that the likes of food, drink, and travel are becoming afterthoughts as people focus on weightier subjects. Nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, consumers are seeking more value and higher quality experiences, with a greater return on their investment. They're expecting brands to elevate their products and services to new levels, consistently innovating in order to meet exacting – and evolving – standards.

2

## Open-source inspiration

The last few years have seen our world change at a rate never seen before. In response, organisations and brands are expected to reach new levels of adaptability, flexing and changing course as needed in order to align with the lifestyles and tastes of modern consumers. Traditional confines and ways of doing things are fast being left behind as we see an increasing expectation of flexibility in terms of time, place and tastes. As some scramble to catch up, we're seeing an exciting acceleration of innovation both in new brands and in older ones open to replotting their path.

3

## Modern reinvention

The trend for nostalgia in recent years has yet to abate. Instead, it's gaining momentum in a new form: reimagination. This movement sees traditional offerings – particularly those associated with simpler, more carefree times – reinvented to suit the tastes, lifestyles and wider concerns of today's consumer. Time honoured methods, ingredients and traditions are making way for inventive and novel developments that are leading the charge towards experiences that are made newly intriguing, not only to those who enjoyed the original version, but a whole new generation.

# MEET THE EXPERTS

## FOOD



### Lulu Grimes

Lulu Grimes is Good Food’s managing editor, having written for most of the UK’s best food publications, including Olive magazine, Food & Travel and Sainsbury’s Magazine. She’s also an author, previously working on a series of internationally published food and travel books covering China, India, Thailand, Italy and France.

## DRINK



### Pritesh Mody

Pritesh, founder of the UK’s leading bespoke bottled cocktail company, World of Zing, and regular cocktail guru on Channel 4’s Sunday Brunch, is one of the most recognisable cocktail experts. Renowned for his innovative use of ingredients, Pritesh and his team are now trusted cocktail partners to some of the UK’s most prestigious hospitality names, including Belmond Pullman, Tonkotsu Restaurants, and The Pig Hotels.

## TRAVEL



### Mark Ellwood

New York-based Mark Ellwood has lived out of a suitcase for most of his life. He is a contributing editor to Conde Nast Traveler, and editor-at-large for luxury bible Robb Report. He is also a columnist for Bloomberg Luxury and the creator and co-host of Bloomberg’s Travel Genius podcast. Mark is also an ongoing contributor to Wall Street Journal and New York Times and the author of Bargain Fever: How to Shop in a Discounted World.





Lingo, Brooklyn  
Source: [Resy](#)

# FOOD TRENDS



# INTRODUCTION

Despite significant challenges like staff shortages, inflation, and rising energy costs, the global food industry is displaying a complex yet resilient growth pattern. According to the [National Restaurant Association's 2023 report](#), the U.S. restaurant and foodservice industry is on track to contribute nearly \$1 trillion to the economy this year, with an expected increase of 500,000 jobs, highlighting a robust recovery. However, in the UK, the restaurant market's recovery presents a more mixed picture. As per the latest [Lumina Intelligence Restaurant Market Report](#), the UK market is forecast to grow by 5.2% to £18.7bn in 2023, yet remains 2.6% behind its pre-pandemic value, with independent outlets facing significant closures.

The cost of living crisis has led to **60% of UK** and **74% of US consumers** cutting back on eating out. Despite these challenges, restaurants are innovatively responding by focusing on enhancing the dining experience, quality, and aligning with changing consumer preferences. These shifts are further driven by growing concerns over processed foods, animal welfare, and climate change, which continue to play a significant role in consumer decision-making. As a result, the industry is witnessing a surge in innovation and creativity, with businesses eagerly adapting to these new dynamics despite the ongoing economic pressures.

To find out more, we talked to Lulu Grimes, managing editor at Good Food, to find out what we can expect to see in the food world in 2024.



Resident NYC,  
Source: [Moosh NYC](#)



# HIGHLIGHTS

1 Changes in working patterns and lifestyles are leading restaurants to modify their offerings, all against a backdrop of continuing challenges in the market.

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2 While sustainability and health concerns remain important, and continue to influence choice, consumers expect these considerations to enhance their experience rather than detract from it.

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3 Diners are seeking added value from their dining experiences, from exclusivity and luxury to novelty and shareability.



# 5 KEY TRENDS

- 1 Making office days taste good
- 2 Fleeting fine dining
- 3 The new golden age of the steakhouse
- 4 Raising little gourmets
- 5 Third culture collisions



# 1 Making office days taste good

In 2023, the hybrid working debate is still a hot one. An astonishing **90% of US businesses** are planning to implement return-to-office policies by the end of 2024 and **69% of UK companies** currently require employees to spend a specific number of days in the office. With **65% of workers** wishing they could work remotely all the time, it will take more than quick coffee takeaways and supermarket meal deals to tempt workers back to the office.

As organisations think of new ways to make office life more palatable and restaurants work to revive the long-depleted lunch trade, office buildings themselves are becoming the new prime location for eating lunch.

In New York, world-class chefs like Daniel Boulud and Gabriel Keuther are setting up shop in some of the more sought-after Manhattan office buildings. According to experts, these arrangements are a **great way to reduce setup costs**, which can be prohibitive for restaurants, as well as offering building landlords an opportunity to share revenue. The landmarked former Sony Tower, purchased and redesigned for nearly \$2 billion by the owners of pioneering Korean steakhouse COTE, is set to play host to a **15,000-square-foot restaurant and café**. A few blocks east, “Iron Chef” TV star and New York culinary icon David Burke will be opening his **first Manhattan restaurant** in over three years at 277 Park Ave.

COTE Korean  
Steakhouse restaurant  
Source: [trycaviar.com](https://trycaviar.com)



90 %  
of US businesses are planning to implement return-to-office policies by the end of 2024

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of UK companies currently require employees to spend a specific number of days in the office





*In 2024, the renaissance of office life will see great food increasingly be used as a perk to tempt people back to their desks*

Across the pond, London's brand new office building, **5 Savile Row**, designed by Squire and Partners, will soon welcome superstar chef Jason Atherton's latest opening, **Row on 5**. This will be Atherton's sixth London restaurant and promises "a culinary voyage" in a multi-course dining experience—perfect for deal-making over long lunches. On the other side of town in London Fields, creative workspace **Netil House** offers coworking and community, as well the opportunity to enjoy **Bambi Bar**, a music led wine bar and restaurant launched by James Dye—the co-owner of the legendary Frank's Café in Peckham. Serving food and cocktails all day, including an oyster happy

hour, against a backdrop of vintage sound systems and record shelves, Frank's Cafe is bringing new energy to workplace dining.

In 2024, the renaissance of office life will see great food increasingly be used as a perk to tempt people back to their desks. This offers a new opportunity for restaurants to think creatively about their locations in the coming year, and for up-and-coming brands to partner with offices, catering companies and coworking spaces to secure new sites, reach fresh clientele and maximise brand visibility.

*Bambi Bar wine bar  
and restaurant  
Source: [bambi-bar.com](http://bambi-bar.com)*



## 2 Fleeting fine dining

With news of UK **restaurant closures** reaching their highest rate in a decade, the departure of high profile restaurants like **Noma** and **inflation driving up prices** at Michelin-starred venues, it's natural for consumers to question the future of fine dining.

Noma cites the difficulty of maintaining such consistently high standards as the driver of its decision, with thin profit margins, rising rents, energy hikes and other overhead costs also behind many a recent closure. However, innovative restaurants and chefs are demonstrating remarkable resilience. Rather than surrendering, they're embarking on a journey to redefine the very essence of fine dining and explore new avenues for its existence.

With **two thirds of UK consumers** making their dining decisions based on the opportunity for new experiences, novelty and change are the order of the day. In the US, the rate of **new pop-up restaurants opening** has risen by 105%. Noma has announced the launch of **Noma 3.0**—a one-night-only event that has already graced London and Kyoto to great acclaim—and even **Le Gavroche** in London, which recently announced its closure after 56 years, is planning pop-ups for the future. In 2024 and beyond, events will be key to fine dining's longevity, providing new opportunities to reinvent a brand and quickly adapt to changing tastes, but also bypass burdensome overhead costs.

NOMA x KOL pop-up  
Source: *Noma Projects*



In the US, the rate of new pop-up restaurants opening has risen by

105%

2/3

of UK consumers are making their dining decisions based on the opportunity for new experiences, novelty and change are the order of the day





*Resident NYC*  
Source: [meetresident.com](https://meetresident.com)



*Muse restaurant by Tom Aikens*  
Source: [musebytomaikens.co.uk](https://musebytomaikens.co.uk)

Globally, acclaimed international chefs are also using special events as a platform to venture beyond the confines of their restaurants, to reach new audiences and craft fresh culinary experiences. At **Resident in NYC**, a mix of up-and-coming and world renowned chefs are given the freedom to push the boundaries of flavours and techniques, resulting in a distinctive menu that evolves every night. Taking place in empty multi-million dollar apartments, they offer both a unique dining experience and exclusive city views. In the UK, Tom Aikens is soon to open **Muse** at his existing Michelin-starred Belgravia restaurant, where he'll welcome big names like Bjorn Frantzén, Isaac McHale and Alberto Landgraf as guest chefs and Lyle's in Shoreditch will be hosting **The Guest Series**, featuring a soon-to-be-named roster of culinary stars.

With endless possibilities for inspired combinations of high-end food and unexpected venues, the trend for pop-up fine dining is a win-win for restaurants, venues and diners alike. In 2024, consumers will be more determined than ever to make their money go further and to experience something both exciting and exclusive, giving guest chefs carte blanche to create sought after, one-night-only events. Established restaurants can also explore the guest chef concept as a way to attract returning customers in search of something fresh, and reach new audiences keen to follow their favourite names.



### 3 The new golden age of the steakhouse

While the rise of veganism is still going strong and **more consumers are reducing their meat intake**, almost **a third of people in the UK** and **72 million US households** consider themselves flexitarian or even ‘social omnivores’. These diners generally eat vegan or vegetarian food at home but enjoy meat as a treat when eating out. When they do, they’re looking for high quality, exceptional cooking and they don’t mind paying for a truly special experience. It appears that meat is making a return to its status as a luxury item, leading a renaissance for the glamour and opulence of the premium steakhouse.

As a result, home-grown American steakhouses are experiencing a resurgence. **New York’s oldest steakhouse**, Delmonico’s, has reopened after a three-year hiatus, with a new generation eagerly awaiting the chance to follow in the footsteps of celebrity diners like Elvis and Elizabeth Taylor. San Francisco’s **Miller & Lux** offers the opulence of a golden age steakhouse, with its tableside flair and \$10,000 carts circulating the dining room. Carneficionados in search of the much-coveted wagyu variety of beef—a market **projected to reach \$24m by 2031**—will be sated by the \$350 wagyu tomahawks.

Miller & Lux steakhouse  
Source: [millerandluxrestaurant.com](http://millerandluxrestaurant.com)







*As consumers seek new ways to make meat dishes the star of their dining experience, restaurants will welcome the opportunity to elevate their offerings to new levels*

In the UK, the trend for luxury meat dishes goes beyond the traditional steakhouse. Superstar Korean steak chef Akira Back is expanding his global chain with a **new 100-seat restaurant in the heart of Soho** in addition to his eponymous restaurant at the Mandarin Oriental. If his acclaimed LA venue is anything to go by, diners will enjoy 30-day dry aged premium beef, either cooked by the kitchen or by themselves on smokeless tabletop grills. In October, London's Mayfair welcomed the **first overseas branch of Aragawa**, the famed Tokyo-based steak specialist. The original restaurant opened in 1967 and is renowned across Japan for serving Tajima, a breed of ultra-premium Kobe beef. As in Tokyo, the meat will be grilled over white charcoal imported from Japan in a purpose-built kiln, overseen by “steak master” Kazuo Imayosh, and the steaks are thought to be the UK's most expensive at between £500 and £900.

For a more British take on luxurious beef dishes, the Lanesborough is making a name for itself with its **opulent Sunday lunch special** – a £75 roast beef with all the trimmings, cooked to perfection and carved tableside on a trolley, adding a touch of theatre to the experience.

As consumers seek new ways to make meat dishes the star of their dining experience, restaurants will welcome the opportunity to elevate their offerings to new levels. Diners will appreciate high quality varieties, clever use of cheaper cuts and original side dishes, along with a dash of luxury and opulence to enhance the experience.

ABSteak by Akira Back  
Source: [Eater LA](#)



# 4 Raising little gourmets

In 2023, the European Society of Cardiology released its **ground-breaking research on the effects of ultra-processed foods** and increasing press coverage and consumer concern soon followed. It found that a diet heavy in UPFs can increase the likelihood of serious heart conditions, kidney disease, strokes and vascular dementia by 39% and research gathered at multiple US universities found that **addiction to ultra-processed food** is thought to affect 14% of adults globally.

As many adults look to their diets and consider making changes to reduce their UPF intake, parents will be concerned to hear that, by age two to five, UPFs account for **nearly two thirds (61%) of calories consumed by UK children** – a higher proportion than their peers in the US and Australia.

With only **2 in 5 consumers** confident that they understand what “ultra-processed” means and most unable to identify a UPF, in 2024 we expect parents to look to trustworthy brands to guide them in cleaning up their children’s menus.

In the UK, healthier, meal kit deliveries like Mindful Chef—which reported a **589% increase in new customer sign-ups** in the first week of 2023—are thriving, and a new addition to the existing roll-call is **Rumble Tums**. Nutritionally dense, kid-friendly, high quality ready meals are delivered to parents through a subscription, offering a guilt-free and convenient alternative to quick and easy UPFs. In the US there are a growing myriad of options for **healthy kids’ meal deliveries**, with different brands catering to babies, toddlers and teens.

Michelin-star toddlers  
Source: *The Times*



Addiction to ultra-processed food is thought to affect

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By age two to five, UPFs account for nearly

2/3  
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Tredwells children's tasting menu  
Source: Jumeirah



Children dining at Apricity  
Source: The Times

In the restaurant sector, the US appears to be leading the way in setting higher standards for children's menus. New Orleans has become the first city in the South to **ban soda and other sugary drinks** from kids' meals, while the National Restaurant Association has launched their Kids Live Well initiative, which helps restaurants to devise healthy kids' menus. In the UK, the **children's tasting menu at Marcus Wareing's Tredwells** is gaining a faithful following, with its seven courses complete with kid-friendly cocktails. Over in Mayfair, Apricity offers a Culinary Kids menu that includes venison and pork rillettes, ox tongue, and a Virunga chocolate tart that is wowing reviewers of every age. The art of making healthy food exciting for kids is both a significant draw for parents and an opportunity to create a new generation of young gourmets.

With concerns surrounding UPFs and children's diets only set to increase, the way is clear for restaurants and food brands to offer creative options for kids that meet health targets. Transparency is key – as consumer education improves in 2024, parents will learn what to look for in a children's menu and creating healthy, convenient, palatable food for kids could set brands apart from the competition and future proof the business.



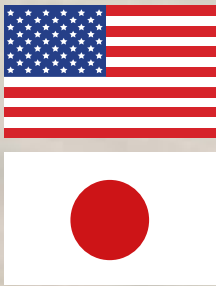
# 5 Third culture collisions

According to Mintel, diners are continuing to embrace ever more adventurous flavours. In fact, **92% of Brits enjoy world cuisines at home** and over half have at least five different cuisines in their culinary repertoire. Similarly, a survey of 2,000 Americans found that **more than half of them (53%) consider themselves adventurous eaters** and expressed an openness to trying international cuisine. While multicultural life has broadened the horizons of many a curious food-lover, a new generation of chefs is championing a fresh take on fusion.

While fusion restaurants have become their own established sector of the industry, the introduction of “third culture” cuisine brings an added element

of intention, meaning and relatable history to the art of the clever combination. **“Third culture” refers to the food of people raised outside of their parents’ cultures**, combining the food of their parents and ancestors with that of the country they grew up in. These young chefs, often first generation British or American, are creating bold, original and delightfully unexpected dishes that are enthralling diners. For those seeking unique experiences, dishes like **birria ramen, tandoori pasta and kimchi mashed potatoes** are exactly the audacious, social-media-friendly dining experience they’re looking for.

Lingo, Brooklyn  
steak tartare  
Source: [Resy](#)



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## *Restaurants and brands have the space to explore interesting combinations, weaving narratives of heritage and ingenuity into their creations*

In the US, **Lingo in Brooklyn** is leading the charge, where chef Emily Yuen brings Japanese and American flavours together in unexpected ways. Diners are raving—and posting—about her spicy beef curry pot pie, smoked tamago sando and whole fried chicken with chili crisp. Another Brooklyn favourite, **Memphis Seoul**, is now expanding to Manhattan, bringing its exuberant “Beale Street meets Gagnam Style” offer to a new audience. The menu features Instagrammable hits like bulgogi meatloaf, gochujang collard greens and their patented Ramen ‘N’ Cheese.

In the UK, Roti’s second restaurant in Manchester is sparking a culinary revolution with its Scottish-Indian fusion. From haggis pakoras to masala mince and tatties, and cheese and onion bhajis, they’re redefining traditional home favourites, winning a cult following in the process. Meanwhile, Sakku Samba, Manchester’s popular Japanese-Brazilian tapas restaurant, has just opened a new venue in Bradford, where its unique combination of sushi and Brazilian grill dishes are bound to delight. Down in London, chef Tomos Parry of Brat fame has just opened Mountain in Soho, where he’s creating new

combinations of traditional Spanish cooking with the dishes of his own Welsh heritage. Sobrasada toasts are served with Welsh honey and guindilla pepper, while whole Welsh lobster caldereta is the star of the show. These ventures not only showcase the culinary ingenuity of their creators but also offer a fresh perspective on the boundless possibilities of fusion cuisine, leaving diners eagerly anticipating what’s next on the menu.

Over the coming year, as consumer palates grow more sophisticated and adventurous with the diverse array of world cuisines, surprising fusions will become a sought-after feature of the dining experience. Restaurants and brands have the space to explore interesting combinations, weaving narratives of heritage and ingenuity into their creations. These flavors should not only offer a novel experience but also bring intrinsic value, allowing diners to embark on a global culinary journey from their table and experience something that not even the most daring home cook could imagine.

Sakku Samba  
Source: Sakku Samba



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## Lean in to indulgence



Miller & Lux restaurant  
Source: [Haute Living San Francisco](#)

The intersection of health consciousness and climate change awareness is prompting consumers to make more moderate and deliberate choices. In response, brands have a unique opportunity to craft exceptional experiences around rare or limited offerings. By emphasising quality over quantity and creating memorable extravagant moments, brands can appeal to this new ethos, turning occasional indulgences into cherished, impactful experiences that resonate with the values of their customers.

## Create novelty-led purpose



Roti Manchester, Scottish-Indian fusion restaurant  
Source: [Manchester World](#)

As consumer desires continue to evolve and diners seek to maximise the impact of eating out, brands will find success in considering the entire dining experience, aiming to surprise and delight. A focus on crafting unique culinary adventures will reap rewards, as will maintaining the highest standards in sustainability, quality and health. Emphasising those standards with transparency and pride will catch the eye and secure the loyalty of discerning, well-informed diners.

## Think beyond traditional spaces



Orchard Park by David Burke  
Source: [Forbes](#)

The ability to move beyond traditional spaces is reshaping the landscape of dining and hospitality, with restaurants embracing the trend of breaking free from traditional confines and seeking out unconventional spaces to offer their services. This strategy can reinvent and reenergise their offerings, providing consumers with extraordinary experiences in familiar settings, like offices, and through unique events. By doing so, brands can captivate new audiences, foster memorable interactions and stay ahead in a market that values innovation and adaptability.





# DRINK TRENDS



# INTRODUCTION

In navigating the current landscape, the global drinks sector is contending with varied challenges and consumer trends. Inflation remains a primary concern, affecting profit margins and influencing a shift towards at-home consumption, with [IWSR Drinks Market Analysis research](#) indicating around 60% of consumers in North America, parts of Europe, South Africa, and Australia are opting to go out less. While popular nights in bars remain [bustling](#), quieter weekdays are experiencing a notable decline. However, once customers are in a venue, the rising costs haven't significantly deterred their spending.

Drinkers continue to view bar visits as a treat and are eager to make the most of it, trading up to premium cocktails and higher-priced spirits, as well as drinks with novel and Instagrammable serves that can't be replicated at home. In fact, [67% of UK drinkers](#) say they're likely to pay more for a higher-quality cocktail, underscoring a sustained interest in unique and upscale bar experiences.

We caught up with Pritesh Mody, founder of World of Zing and one of the UK's leading drinks experts, to learn about how the drinks industry is responding to changing concerns and tastes, and where he thinks bars and drinks brands will focus their attention in 2024.





# HIGHLIGHTS

1 The low and no-alcohol trend continues to flourish, but a new middle ground is emerging. This is giving way to sessionable cocktails that appeal to consumers seeking moderation without sacrificing the pleasure of a classic spirit forward cocktail.

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2 The cocktail scene is seeing a growing desire for healthier, savoury and sustainable options, with an added element of fun and novelty. Expect to see creative and eco-friendly twists on playful drinks, making them both indulgent and responsible.

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3 The global whisky market is expanding, creating opportunities for new players like English distilleries. As whisky continues to broaden its appeal, English whisky is poised to become renowned for its innovation and unique flavour profiles.



# 5 KEY TRENDS

- 1 Disco drinks grow up
- 2 Make way for English whisky
- 3 From distillery to dividends
- 4 The intriguing side of Asian flavours
- 5 Clever cuts to classic cocktails



# 1 Disco drinks grow up

In recent years, the nostalgia for simpler, more carefree times, has spurred a disco cocktail revival. These colourful, lively libations, once dismissed as passé, have made a spirited comeback as beloved staples in the cocktail scene. In 2024, we expect to see these cocktails continue to gain popularity, but as consumers increasingly prioritise **health**, **affordability** and **sustainability**, we'll see bars ditching old recipes in favour of fresher, healthier and sustainably sourced ingredients that can offer more refined and even savoury flavours.

According to EHL Insights in Switzerland, bartenders have seen **increasing interest in savoury and spicy cocktails** throughout 2023 and expect to see ever more complex and intriguing

flavours in demand in 2024. Creative mixologists are finding innovative ways to cut through the sweetness of traditional disco drinks and add a savoury twist. For example, **Nickel City in Texas** has given the Grasshopper a new lease of life. No longer neon, this new mix uses reposado tequila and matcha ice cream, with the addition of frozen chapulines – actual grasshoppers. These umami-rich flavour bombs create an irresistible sweet-salty combination that's instantly compelling. The Appletini has had a similar makeover at **Swan Bar in San Diego**, where syrupy mixes have been replaced with a blend of fresh apple juice and spices, served on draft – a process that tempers the sweetness of the drink, while adding delicious notes of apple pie.

Grasshopper cocktail  
Source: *NY Times*



48%

of US alcohol drinkers say they consider a company's sustainability or environmental initiatives before purchasing alcohol (IWSR)

73%

of Gen Z saying they're willing to spend more for a sustainable product





*While consumers are looking to their health, the environment and value for money, we expect to see an increasing desire for fun, Instagrammable drinking experiences in 2024*

Traditionally, the disco drink can be spotted across a crowded bar, thanks to its vivid hue. Those artificial colourings of yesteryear have fallen out of favour in modern times, but even the most discerning drinker enjoys a bit of visual excitement, and creative cocktail makers are finding new ways to add a splash of unexpected natural colour to their creations. Over in the UK, Maene has managed to create a **deliciously elegant blue cocktail** – a blend of Mezcal, plum wine and tonic along with spirulina cordial to make it an intriguing shade of blue. The Glenlivet in the US has also found a novel way to bring some colour to whisky

cocktails with its **Ex(ube)rant Espressotini**, made bright purple with the inclusion of ube, a yam native to Southeast Asia.

While consumers are looking to their health, the environment and value for money, we expect to see an increasing desire for fun, Instagrammable drinking experiences in 2024. Innovative bars and brands will find an eager audience for refined, cleverly crafted creations that are exciting to drink and difficult to create at home, offering fun and novelty that's been reinvented for the tastes of today.

*Maene Mezcal, plum wine, tonic and spirulina cordial cocktail*  
Source: *Bon Appetit*



## 2 Make way for English whisky

According to new research, the global whisky market is set to reach \$127 billion by 2028, expanding at a CAGR of 6.34%. This growth reflects a significant shift in consumer demographics, as whisky sheds its stereotypical image and broadens its appeal. Notably, women now represent 30% of US whisky drinkers. Online, whisky’s popularity is also surging, becoming the second-most-searched-for alcohol after wine. This online trend is a testament to whisky’s widespread acceptance and its status as the preferred choice for 13.4% of drinkers in the UK.

As consumers become more engaged in the category, New World whiskies—those not produced in Scotland, Ireland, Canada, the US or Japan—are gaining a faithful following amongst connoisseurs, and in 2024, English whisky in particular appears to be poised to establish itself as a worthy contender.

It’s been an exciting 12 months for whisky made in England. Last year the English Whisky Guild was founded and November 2023 saw the second ever English Whisky Festival, with 32 distilleries exhibiting (6 more than 2022). The British Standards Institution also published the first guidelines on Welsh, English, Irish and Scotch whisky production, creating a globally recognised standard that buyers will look to for quality assurance. Welsh whisky was also granted protected status, with English whisky expecting to be the next in line.

Scotch single malt is strictly held to its own unique and traditional standards, while English whisky has more room for innovation. Unlike Scottish whiskies, English whisky can be made from any cereal, distilled in any type of still and matured in casks made from the wood of their choice. As a result, over 50 up-and-coming English distilleries are taking advantage of these creative opportunities and differentiating their offerings with the likes of London rye and Norfolk peated single malt.

London Rye Whisky  
Source: East London  
Liquor Co



The global whisky market  
is set to reach  
**\$127<sup>BN</sup>**  
by 2028

Women now represent  
**30%**  
of US whisky drinkers





Cooper King sustainable whisky  
Source: [cooperkingdistillery.co.uk](https://cooperkingdistillery.co.uk)



The Lakes 'The Whiskymaker's Reserve No.7'  
Source: [lakesdistillery.com](https://lakesdistillery.com)

Sustainability is also fueling innovation. Take, for instance, **Cooper King in Yorkshire**—a young distillery influenced by Tasmanian distilling methods. In October 2023, it launched its first own-make whisky. Crafted in small batches and without automation, it's produced entirely with renewable energy, earning the distinction of being England's first net-zero energy whisky. Reflecting its eco-friendly ethos and exceptional quality, the first batch was met with overwhelming demand, selling out in just ten minutes.

**The Lakes Distillery**, recently launched the final whisky in their award-winning signature series, taking full advantage of the opportunity to experiment with different casks. **The Whiskymaker's Reserve No.7** is matured in Oloroso, PX and red wine casks and has already become a coveted bottle amongst aficionados. As have four recently released limited editions from **The Cotswolds Distillery**, which is investing in driving awareness of the category with its first ever above-the-line advertising campaign. With innovative brands like these gaining acclaim, we expect to see growth and an increase in interest in 2024, both within the industry and amongst whisky drinkers.

While old world varieties remain the expected choice for whisky drinkers, in 2024, English Whisky presents an intriguing alternative. Bars and retailers are ideally placed to pique the interest of guests with a curated selection of these new expressions. Moreover, by offering education into the distinctive taste profiles, quality, and sustainability efforts of English Whisky, outlets have the opportunity to elevate the tasting journey, turning each sip into an opportunity for exploration and conversation.



### 3 From distillery to dividends

As discerning consumers increasingly prioritise provenance, sustainability and rarity, in 2024, we expect to see an increasing demand for collectible assets. This is particularly true for younger audiences, who are keen to be **perceived as collectors**, seeing luxury goods as investments that will appreciate over time. One of the most striking alternative investments appears to be rare whisky, which according to **Knight Frank** has soared by an astonishing 586% over the last decade, outperforming cars (164%), wine (137%) and watches (108%). Particularly appealing to those who want to **hedge their portfolios against inflation risk** and market volatility, investors are seeking New World terroirs, premium packaging and limited editions, with brands eagerly responding to the call.

High-profile moves in the collector’s market, such as billionaire Pierre Chen’s anticipated record-setting **wine collection sale** are helping to inspire a new wave of interest. Carefully acquired over 40 years, it features bottles expected to fetch £156,000 each, pointing towards a staggering total value of £41 million, and thought to be the most valuable in history.

In the world of whisky, **The Cask100 Fund** is also gaining traction amongst investors. The \$20 million five-year closed-end vehicle provides experts to advise on investment in rare collectible whiskies, casks and more. The minimum investment for the fund’s first closing is \$10,000, and is testament to the confidence in the asset’s enduring value.

*The Cask100 Fund  
Macallan’s The Red Collection  
Source: [Penta](#)*



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*In 2024, the resilience of alcohol sales and potential for strong returns will position luxury spirits as a more prominent player in investment portfolios*

Those seeking to invest in other spirits are keen to enter the burgeoning rum market. According to IWSR, rum has developed a healthy “premium and above” category, with volumes expected to climb by **+6% between 2021 and 2026**, and continues to gain acclaim as a serious, well-crafted spirit for sipping. This recognition was celebrated at the **DFS Masters of Wines and Spirits** exhibition in Macau, which, for the first time, introduced a segment dedicated exclusively to rum and tequila. 2023 also saw ultra-premium Colombian distillery **Dictador** launch the world’s most expensive rum, priced at **\$1.5m per bottle**. Invitation-only buyers are flown

to its distillery to blend their own bespoke variety, which they’ll take home in a 24-carat gold bottle. Looking ahead, the scope of investment-grade spirits will broaden, with **tequila** primed as the next sought-after asset.

In 2024, the resilience of alcohol sales and potential for strong returns will position luxury spirits as a more prominent player in investment portfolios. For brands, it will be more important than ever to emphasise their value, authenticity, heritage and savoir-faire to demonstrate a timelessness that is sure to be appreciated in value and enjoyment.

Dictador M-City  
Golden Cities Cartagena  
Source: *Rum Raiders*



# 4 The intriguing side of Asian flavours

The Asian flavoured drinks trend shows no signs of slowing and is continuing to mature, incorporating ever more interesting, diverse and refined ingredients. According to Bibendum, **82% of MODE-tracked bars** in the UK now offer cocktails containing Asian ingredients, such as sake, shochu and umeshu, and **AI-powered research by Olam Food Ingredients** reveals that the flavours such as dragon fruit, sesame, yuzu, lychee, and matcha are taking off in the US and Europe.

The infusion of Asian flavours into cocktails taps into the curiosity of a **third of global consumers** inclined to try a drink just for its novel taste. In 2024, we'll see this trend merge with the rising demand for less sweet serves, with umami, spices, and other **Asian flavour profiles in cocktails** enabling bars to craft savoury cocktails with layers of complexity and subtle intrigue.

The principle of umami is a compelling one for cocktail makers, allowing for playful combinations

that create a moreish salty-sweet effect. Salted egg yolk is a popular ingredient in Asian baking and has become a recent TikTok favourite. In 2023, we've seen it gain a following amongst **coffee lovers**, paving the way for **innovative uses in cocktails**, thanks to the invention of salted egg yolk syrup.

Upping the ante in terms of salinity is Washington DC's St Anselm Bar, which is seeking to redeem the long-maligned Asian food ingredient MSG. It's the star of their XXX Martini in the form of a **homemade MSG-infused vermouth**. The drink is served with a rim of togarashi – a Japanese blend of chilli, sesame, orange zest, ginger, and Sichuan pepper – in response to increasing demand for spice in cocktails. Over in London, acclaimed new bar Nipperkin includes a Dorset wasabi distillate in its cocktails, adding an interesting dimension of heat to drinks, and demonstrating that Asian flavours can be locally produced.

MSG Martini  
Source: Food & Wine



82%

of MODE-tracked bars in the UK now offer cocktails containing Asian ingredients, such as sake, shochu and umeshu

1/3

of global consumers inclined to try a drink just for its novel taste





*'The Biryani' The Savoury Project*  
Source: [@thesavouryproject](#)



*'Dragon Old Fashioned' Lucy Wong*  
Source: [lucywong.co.uk](#)

Some are even pushing the realms of savoury flavour to delightful extremes. Over in Hong Kong, Asian inspired cocktails are being pushed deep into new territory at **The Savory Project**, a recent opening from the brains behind Asia's top-ranked bar for three years running. Here you can enjoy The Biryani, made with butter biryani masala, arrack, plum shochu, tonka bean, pineapple, and peppers, served with a yogurt ball, or the Thai Beef Salad, a blend of beef, peanut, kaffir lime, chilli, coconut, and rum, served with Aberdeen Angus biltong.

More delicately flavoured cocktails are expected at **Dishoom's first standalone bar**, The Permit Room, opening in Brighton at the end of 2023. We expect to see its already extensive Bombay-Irani-inspired drinks menu expand, building on its reputation for striking Indian ingredients such as arrack, a rum-like spirit made from the fermented sap of coconut flowers. Similarly subtle flavours from China and Japan are found at **London's Lucy Wong bar**, which will be adding more Asian-inspired riffs on classics, such as the Dragon Old Fashioned, with Japanese whisky, coffee liqueur and Chinese five-spice bitters.

In 2024, we'll expect to see more bars and brands tapping into the rich and inspiring world of Asian ingredients, embracing the growing shift towards savoury tastes and nuanced flavours, while giving guests the opportunity to travel across continents from their bar stool and enjoy unique drinking experiences they'll love to tell their friends about.



# 5 Clever cuts to classic cocktails

For a while now consumers have been **becoming more mindful about their drinking habits**, and in 2023 we saw that **more than half (58%) of no/low alcohol consumers** choose a mix of no/low and full-strength alcoholic drinks on the same occasion. In 2024, we expect to see consumers demand more options that strike a perfect balance between low/no alcohol content and high-proof drinks, without compromising on flavour and visual interest.

2023’s trend for lower ABV serves, and in particular, spritzes has given growth to the vermouth and amaro category — in fact, the fortified wine market is expected to grow by \$5.2 billion from 2022 to 2027 at a CAGR of 5.31%. In 2024, we

expect to see more demand for cut cocktails — cleverly recreated classics that reduce ABV by swapping some or all of the spirits with fortified wines, making them as sessionable as beers.

At British bars, new openings like **Dover Yard in London** include an array of tempting low alcohol options as standard, such as the Passion Fruit Martini, made with Una Palma Fino sherry, and the Palomito, starring Mancino Chinato, while London Vermouth Company is promoting its **Fitty-Fitty Dry Martini**. Made with their own No.3 S.E. Dry, unlike traditional recipes, it recommends equal parts vermouth and gin, making it a much less boozier alternative to its original counterpart.

Briggs Brown  
‘Stirred Daiquiri’  
Source: *Punch*

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*As consumers continue to discover the appealing middle ground between an evening of traditional drinks and eschewing alcohol altogether, 2024 will see an opportunity for bars to create and promote sessionable drinks*

In the USA, creativity abounds when it comes to supporting existing spirits with vermouth and amaro. In Miami, Lucas Garcia of Kyu has introduced **a riff on the margherita** using a mix of dry vermouth and amaro to emulate the herbaceous sweetness and spice of tequila. Briggs Brown at L.A.'s Everson Royce Bar has **combined the principles of daiquiri and a gimlet**, using equal parts lime cordial and navy-strength gin alongside sweet vermouth.

As consumers continue to discover the appealing middle ground between an evening of traditional drinks and eschewing alcohol altogether, 2024 will see an opportunity for bars to create and promote sessionable drinks. However, education is key, and bars and brands will benefit from clearly labelling ABVs on menus and explaining that low-alcohol options can be full of flavour and flair.

*Dover Yard  
Low alcohol cocktails  
Source: Seen in the City*



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## Stir curiosity in English whisky



*The English Smokey Whisky*  
Source: [The English Distillery](#)

New categories require education. By offering tastings, educational materials and themed events, distilleries can effectively educate consumers about this emerging category, highlighting its unique flavours and innovation to foster appreciation and curiosity among guests and inspire a new generation of whisky lovers.

## Use global culinary inspiration to drive innovation



*The Savoury Project, 'Peppercorn'*  
Source: [TimeOut](#)

Encourage a sense of discovery and adventure by regularly introducing new and seasonal flavours from different parts of the world. Limited-time offerings and special event menus focused on specific cultural themes can attract guests eager to experience something new. Part of the allure of these globally inspired offerings is the story and culture behind them, so bars and restaurants can enhance the customer experience by providing authentic storytelling around ingredients and processes.

## Bring the fun



*The Grasshopper disco cocktail*  
Source: [The Cocktail Service](#)

In a challenging year, bars and brands have a unique opportunity to provide fun and guilt-free drinking experiences. By offering creative, health-conscious cocktails, showcasing novel flavours, vibrant colours and crafting sessionable drinks, there's an opportunity to deliver joyful moments that resonate with consumers' desire for responsible yet delightful indulgence.





# TRAVEL TRENDS

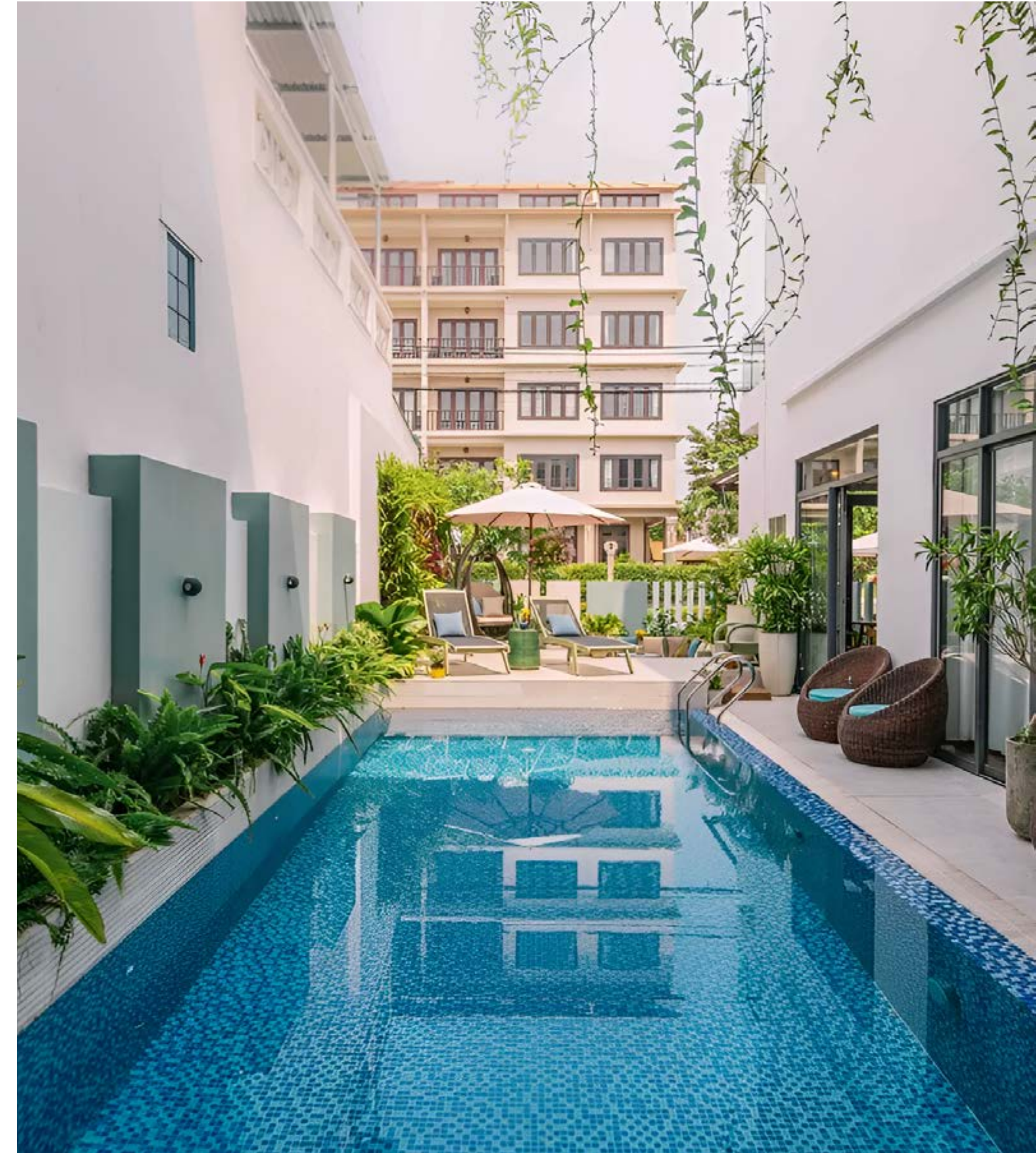


# INTRODUCTION

Travel continues to be more important to consumers than ever. Despite climate change, political turmoil, strikes, and travel chaos, **a survey of Virtuoso travellers** found that 74% agree that it's worth paying more to create a travel experience that best fits their expectations.

Alongside cost, social media, and culinary tourism are taking the lead when it comes to choosing a next holiday destination. Where once recommendations from friends and family took precedence, American Express found that **46% of Gen-Z and Millennial respondents** have been inspired to visit a destination after seeing it featured on Instagram, and 47% have planned an entire trip around visiting a specific restaurant.

We talked to Mark Ellwood, travel author and journalist, to hear more about how the travel industry is responding to shifting priorities and changing landscapes.



*Airbnb Rooms  
Hoi An, Vietnam  
Source: Conde Nast Traveler*



# HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Rising temperatures are significantly influencing travel decisions. During peak summer months, more travellers are seeking cooler climates and destinations that offer water-based activities to beat the heat.
- 2 Culinary experiences are becoming a primary motivator for travel. Tourists increasingly view food and drink as essential ways to authentically experience a destination, with a growing interest in spirits and distillery tours.
- 3 Despite economic pressures, travel remains a priority for many. However, the cost of living crisis is leading travellers to seek cost-effective alternatives like replica destinations closer to home and upscale hostels, with high expectations throughout.



# 5 KEY TRENDS

- 1 Sommerfrische returns
- 2 Charter escapades
- 3 Spirited adventures
- 4 Replica travel
- 5 Mature wanderlust



# 1 Sommerfrische returns

Summer 2023 was the **hottest on record around the globe** and surprised many holidaymakers, with wildfires engulfing Europe and Burning Man reduced to a mudbath. As travellers re-evaluate whether the usual combination of sun, sea, and sand is still a tempting proposition, in 2024 we’re expecting to see travellers look to cooler climes. According to **research by Booking.com**, more than half of travellers (51%) say that climate change will impact the way they plan their 2024 holidays and even more (56%) report that, as temperatures soar, they’ll use their travel time to cool down further from home. Here we’ll see a return to centuries old traditions across Europe, where people would flee

the heat of the city for the cool breezes of nearby mountains and lakes, known in Austria as *Sommerfrische* – literally, summer freshness. We’re already seeing travellers eschewing the likes of Spain and Italy for destinations with lower temperatures. Greenland - mostly covered in ice - is **expecting an influx of tourists** with the 2024 opening of its new airport, and Denmark, France, and the UK could see similar increases.

*The Dolomites*  
Source: *Vogue*



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More than  
HALF

report that, as temperatures soar, they’ll use their travel time to cool down further from home





*With last season's beachgoers turning to cooler options for 2024, there's new opportunity for otherwise overlooked locations to step in and fill the gap*

Summer isn't the only season to be affected by extreme weather changes. This year saw multiple high profile ski resort closures as warmer winters have **shrunk ski seasons to a few precious weeks**, making them largely unprofitable. Forward-thinking resorts are now looking to offer **summer alternatives to skiing and snowboarding** that make the most of their mountain breezes and stunning scenery. A prime example is the renowned **Rosa Alpina resort in the Dolomites**, which is being given a new lease of life by Aman. On reopening in late 2024, its Michelin-starred restaurant will be joined by a spa with forest views, private gardens, a cinema, and more, with activities such as hiking, climbing, cycling, and golf. Eagerly awaited in Austria is the 2024 reopening of **Schloss Fuschl, now owned by Rosewood**. Its idyllic lakeside location, surrounded by lush forests and towering mountains, will play host to multiple world-class restaurants, as well as Rosewood's wellbeing concept, Asaya.

As tourists flock to the lakes of Europe to cool down, we expect to see a similar trend in the US. With over **a third of travellers (36%) interested**

**in water-centric vacations** in 2024, new openings such as **One&Only Moonlight Basin in Montana** are tapping into this new travel trend. Nestled amidst the forests, lakes and mountains of Yellowstone National Park, this scenic resort will offer a return to simplicity, with 360° mountain views and luxurious comfort. On the more affordable side of the scale, a new chain concept from Starwood Hotels is launching **Field & Stream Lodge Company**. Aiming to roll out near US national parks, mountains, and lakes, it seeks to attract a new segment of outdoor enthusiasts willing to pay more for a design-forward experience.

With last season's beachgoers turning to cooler options for 2024, there's new opportunity for otherwise overlooked locations to step in and fill the gap. Mountain and lakeside resorts can showcase the beauty of their summers, creating a steadier footfall throughout the year by leaning into consumers' interest in connecting with nature and spending time on or by the water. City destinations can maximise the potential of this trend by offering excursions for guests and showcasing the natural landscapes nearby.

*One&Only Moonlight  
Basin, Montana  
Source: Travel + Leisure*



## 2 Charter escapades

Until recently, private jets and yachts were the reserve of celebrities, politicians and the ultra-rich. In a post-pandemic world, **we’re watching that change**. As soon as travel restrictions eased, we saw more consumers than usual opt for private options, with private jet travel **increasing by more than 23%** in the US since the start of the pandemic. In 2023, it’s clear that these travellers aren’t prepared to go back to business class, and a new generation of wealthy consumers are seeking to avoid chaos at airports and difficulties with commercial flights, with the luxury experience starting as soon as they leave home.

Travel itself seems to be growing in importance to consumers. According to **a survey of Virtuoso travellers**, 74% agree that “creating a travel experience that best fits my expectations is more important than price,” and found that travellers

planned to increase their average spend per person by 34%. According to **YouGov’s latest travel insights report**, travel demand (and spending) is highest among younger affluents, with 54% of high earners under the age of 35 saying that travel is more important since the pandemic.

As travellers seek ways to make the most of their experience, high-net-worth travellers are causing a surge in private aviation. **Four Seasons recently revealed its 2025 itineraries** for private jet experiences, combining a Four Seasons stay with a carefully curated itinerary of tours and experiences. Examples include Miami to Madrid via Mexico and Hawaii to London via Bali and Dubai. Resorts like **Miavana are also responding to demand**, having recently introduced packages combining a five-star stay with private transfers in the hotel’s Learjet 45 at \$33,000 per person per week.

Four Seasons private jet  
Source: *Norbert Hartnyani*

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The Amandira, private dining  
Source: [aman.com](https://aman.com)



The Amandira, bedroom  
Source: [aman.com](https://aman.com)

Not to be outdone, **Emirates is moving into the private aviation sector**, with a fleet of Embraer Phenom 100EV planes. Each journey begins with a chauffeur-driven ride to the airport and a personal representative to escort travellers through a streamlined airport experience, and ends with being whisked through customs at a private terminal.

While the skies fill with private jets, the seas are seeing an even bigger shift. Virtuoso reports that their **private yacht bookings** are up 79% since 2019 and some of the world’s most luxurious hotel brands are planning their own voyages. On board **Aman’s custom-built private yacht, the Amandira**, guests can enjoy five spacious cabins and a crew of 14, including an experienced dive master, private chef, waiter, and massage therapist, all for upwards of \$14,000 a night. In the UK, Hebrides Cruises has recently added a new super yacht to its luxury fleet. In 2024, guests can charter the **Lucy Mary, a classic 23-metre mahogany-interior yacht**, with an expert crew ready to sail them around the Hebrides, spotting wildlife, and docking at hidden coastal gems, secret anchorages, and famous landmarks.

With the next generation of luxury travellers demonstrating a renewed appetite for trailblazing and discovery, expedition micro-cruising has a bright future. In 2024, we’ll see travel brands appealing to their adventurous mindset, with voyages to unconventional locations and otherwise unreachable corners of the globe, such as remote West African archipelagos, Australia’s Kimberley region or the Northwest Passage. Whether it’s appealing to the cerebral with in-depth educational experiences or curating narrative-driven trips inspired by beloved books or films, partnering with recognised experts in their field can add a crucial cachet to luxury travel experiences.



### 3 Spirited adventures

The traveller’s desire to learn more about a destination’s food and drink is almost a given these days, and **culinary tourism is anticipated to have a value of \$3.46 billion** by 2028. In 2024, where once travellers would be happy to sample local cuisines and perhaps take a cooking class, we’re seeing a move towards excursions, guided visits and richer educational opportunities.

Wineries and breweries have long been a staple of culinary travel, and in the following year we expect to see an increase in distillery tourism. Once secretive and rarely visited, distilleries are now opening dynamic visitors’ centres, offering tastings and tours alongside workshops and immersive experiences. In the UK, 2022 saw a **425% increase in visitors to Ireland’s whiskey distilleries**, and visitor spend per head at Scotch

whisky visitor centres reached **more than £85m**. In the US, the Tennessee Whiskey Trail announced that distilleries were not only one of the top-visited tourism attractions in the state, but **brought in \$3.45 billion in 2022** alone.

Distilleries are now taking care to include **extensive visitor centres** in order to bring their brand home to life. Scotland, arguably the go-to destination for distillery tours, recently saw the opening of **the UK’s first “vertical distillery”**. Port of Leith’s modern nine-storey building overlooks Edinburgh’s historic harbour and promises a 90-minute tour that allows guests to fill their own miniature bottle and taste their way through the production process in its purpose-built Quality Control Tasting Laboratory.

Distillery Tour  
Hayman’s Gin  
Source: *Hayman’s Gin*



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## *2024 will see drinks brands enjoy a golden opportunity to use their distilleries to fulfil a growing thirst for experience-led discovery*

**Scotland's Macallan Distillery** recently reframed their offering as “a complete hospitality destination experience, rather than simply a tourism attraction”, with guests enjoying packages ranging from the £50 Discovery Tour to a £600 fishing trip on the estate. Upping the ante is Highland Park Distillery, with its **Rare & Exclusive Experience** at £1,300, where connoisseurs will enjoy a fireside tasting of whiskies that have never been released to the public.

In Japan, rapidly becoming a destination of pilgrimage for whisky lovers, the long-awaited new **Komoro Distillery opened its doors to the public** this summer. Surrounded by forests, with scenic views over the city of Komoro, this ambitious architectural feat resembles a modern cathedral to whisky, where visitors can enjoy in-depth educational experiences before settling into the fine dining restaurant.

Travel through the world of drinks is also developing beyond whisky. In Germany, B Corp-certified **Elephant Gin has opened a new distillery and**

**visitor centre**, offering guests the chance to experience the distillation process, select their own botanicals and bottle their own gin before relaxing in the African-inspired bar. In France, Belmond has formed an exclusive partnership with Ruinart, the world's oldest champagne house, and is welcoming guests aboard its “**luxury floating villa**”, **the Coquelicot**, to tour the Champagne region and enjoy fine dining, relaxation and a tour of the famous vineyards.

As travel and taste converge, 2024 will see drinks brands enjoy a golden opportunity to use their distilleries to fulfil a growing thirst for experience-led discovery. Travel brands and destinations can showcase the way distilleries are enhancing their tours with education, immersion, and local flavour, with hotel excursions and packages including tours and tastings. For drinks brands, they'll not only delight visitors but inspire them to become vocal advocates when they return home, naturally amplifying their brand's reach and appeal.

*The Coquelicot*  
Belmond x Ruinart  
Source: [Belmond Media Hub](#)



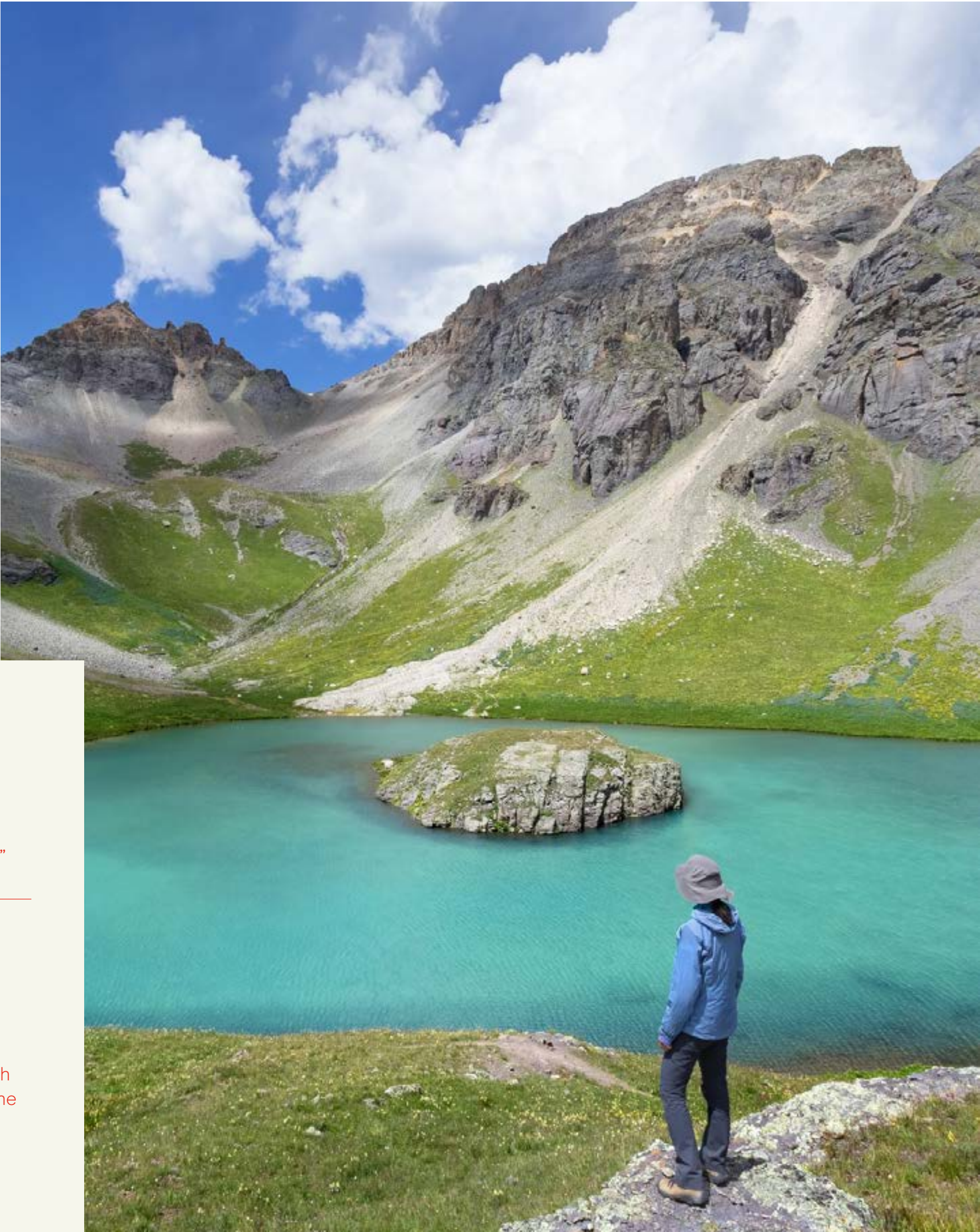
# 4 Replica travel

While travel continues to be a priority for consumers and remarkably resilient against inflation, the economic downturn is inspiring travellers to think more creatively than ever about their next trip. In 2024, we'll see well-informed and curious consumers seek to maximise their budget by looking for alternative destinations that offer similar experiences to the places on their bucket lists – except with lower prices and closer to home. Dubbed “dupe destinations”, these up-and-coming places are now preparing to welcome an influx of tourists seeking affordable luxury.

In fact, a survey by Skyscanner found that 93% of global travellers are open to going to a “dupe destination”, with about 64% saying they'd do

so to save money, with carbon emissions and travel time as further considerations. For US travellers, new screening processes about to be implemented for travel to Europe are inspiring tourists to look closer to home for the experiences they crave. Lesser-known American destinations are being recommended as surprising alternatives to European hotspots, such as Ouray in Colorado instead of the Swiss Alps. Ouray's snow-capped San Juan Mountains and crystal-clear lakes offer breath-taking scenery and opportunities for hiking and water sports, while new luxurious off-the-grid lodges and huts make it a covetable place to stay.

Ouray Colorado mountains  
Source: Titus Adventure



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Plovdiv's Roman Theatre  
Source: [Telegraph](#)



Albania, Grana Bay  
Source: [ourbigjourney.com](#)

City breaks in particular are offering ingenious opportunities to swap **iconic capitals for hidden gems**, with suggestions such as eschewing Rome in favour of Bulgarian city Plovdiv. Said to be the oldest inhabited city in Europe, Plovdiv has its Ancient Theatre of Philippopolis to stand in for the Colosseum and five-star, centrally-located hotels for under \$100 a night. Those looking to explore Catalonia need not head straight to expensive Barcelona, when just 67 miles northeast is the city of Girona, with a thriving food scene and waterfront views, and day trips to Barcelona just a 90 minute drive away.

For those in search of the traditional beach resort experience, the default options of Spain and Greece are giving way to a surprising new contender: Albania. A brand new \$125m airport will be opened by April 2024 and, according to Wizz Air, **passenger numbers are up 27% for the first half of 2023**. Albania's highly engaging **social media presence** has boosted its appeal to younger travellers, along with its sandy beaches, towering mountains, canyons, and lagoons - all with milder summers and meals for two averaging £29.

By emphasising the unique appeal of the route less travelled, in 2024 brands can cater to the cost-conscious explorer without compromising on the allure of discovery and adventure. Highlighting the comparative advantages, such as cultural richness, scenic beauty, and similar experiences at a fraction of the cost, these alternatives can be positioned not as second-best options, but as smart and savvy travel choices. Brands ready to tailor their marketing strategies to showcase the charm and authenticity of these destinations have the opportunity to transform them into first-choice hotspots for a new generation of travellers.



# 5 Mature wanderlust

Solo travel has long been associated with gap years, backpacking and young people finding themselves in obscure destinations. Today, the face of solo travel is a very different one.

Tour companies and airlines have been watching interest in solo travel skyrocket all year. EF Go Ahead Tours has seen a **200% increase in solo traveller bookings** since the start of the year, and data from Kayak shows that **searches for single-traveller flights were 36% higher** for 2023. According to research by Skyscanner, 65% of solo travellers go it alone because **family and friends don't share their interests** and **Hilton's 2024 Trends Report** showed that other reasons include enjoying the independence (42%), flexibility (46%) and self-discovery (20%). We're also seeing solo travel rise amongst older demographics. This year **29% of G Adventures' solo travellers**

**were 35-54-year-olds, with 55-69-year-olds accounting for 13%** (both up on 2019 figures). In addition, according to Condor Ferries, **84% of solo travellers globally are women.**

One of the most interesting industry responses to this trend has been a renaissance in the hostel sector. A far cry from the YHA dorms of the past, a new crop of grown up, design-led hostels are offering mature travellers a new way to stay and to make their money go further, often with quality amenities and always with the option of a private room. In Australia and New Zealand, **Lylo** is a new eco-conscious hostel with self-contained pods, ensuite rooms and sociable chill-out zones. It has coworking spaces and self catering kitchens, so no one has to resort to a vending machine dinner, and individual pods start from \$NZ65 (roughly £30) a night.

Lylo self-contained pods  
Source: [lylo.com](https://lylo.com)



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## *In the coming year, we expect to see more travel and hospitality brands find innovative ways to cater to the growing demographic of mature solo travellers*

Lylo follows in the footsteps of **Generator**, a rapidly growing hostel brand that just launched its third property in Berlin. Generator combines affordable luxury with a sociable spirit, and guests can choose to bunk up with a roomful of new acquaintances or upgrade to a penthouse suite. Also founded on the principle of bringing travel and socialising together is hostel chain **The People**, currently expanding all over France. Warm and welcoming, with spacious interiors and sleek design, these hostels hold regular events designed to bring guests and the local community together, such as concerts, exhibitions, workshops and artist residencies.

For solo travellers who prefer a more luxurious experience, summer 2023 saw Airbnb roll out a new type of listing: **Airbnb Rooms**. The rise in solo travel has taken the company back to its roots, where guests can find single rooms to rent, rather than entire homes. Examples include **a breathtaking rooftop apartment in Da Nang, Vietnam**, a spacious villa room with an ocean-view balcony

in El Nido, Philippines, and a grand deluxe penthouse in Bangkok – all with luxury amenities, thoughtful services and plenty of privacy.

In response to a marked increase in solo travel requests from female clients over 45, in 2023, bespoke luxury travel company SevenTravel created **Singlemoons**. Offering experiences such as holistic health retreats in Thailand, yoga immersion courses in Morocco or extended spa breaks in Indonesia, it aims to appeal to solo travellers looking to reconnect with themselves.

In the coming year, we expect to see more travel and hospitality brands find innovative ways to cater to the growing demographic of mature solo travellers. Efforts to reduce single supplements, offers of guided group excursions, and opportunities for travellers to meet one another will all be appealing to this expanding market, along with an emphasis on exploration, self discovery and relaxation.

*Solo female traveller  
in Istanbul  
Source: Seven Travel*



# KEY TAKEAWAYS

## A passion-led approach



Elephant Gin distillery tour  
Source: [Elephant Gin](#)

Travellers are increasingly seeking authentic experiences that align with their values and passions. This trend offers an opportunity for destinations to highlight unique cultural, culinary or adventure experiences that resonate with visitors’ personal interests. Tailoring travel offerings to these specific passions can enhance the perceived authenticity and appeal of a destination.

## Flexible offerings



Summer in the mountains  
Source: [Lech Zurs](#)

Changing travel patterns present an opportunity to diversify offerings. This includes adapting destinations for year-round appeal and creating tailored experiences for different traveller types, including solo adventurers. By catering to individual preferences and lifestyles, destinations can maintain consistent visitor traffic and meet the evolving needs of travellers.

## Uber personalisation



Emirates private jet  
Source: [Emirates Executive](#)

People want to make the most of their travel. The growing desire for personalised itineraries underscores the need for travel offerings that are customisable and adaptable to individual needs and preferences. From private excursions to unique solo travel experiences, providing options that allow travellers to create their own unique journey is key. Leveraging AI as a sophisticated tool can enhance this personalisation, offering smart, bespoke itinerary suggestions that resonate with each traveller’s unique desires and expectations, ensuring every journey is as individual as the traveller themselves.



# CONCLUSION

2024 looks set to be another year full of challenges and change. Uncertainty continues to reign economically, with cause for optimism in dropping inflation and the US economy gaining strength, while cost of living crises continue to affect more people as time goes on. Conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine will also change the context within which many industries operate, and climate change is still at the forefront of many minds.

The good news is that food, drink and travel will continue to increase in importance. Consumers are better informed than ever, so they know what they want and what they're willing to pay for it. For brands, that means raising the bar, constantly adapting and flexing, and innovating with agility to meet the rapidly changing tastes and requirements of global consumers. Brands set to thrive in 2024 will be the ones that not only offer enhanced value for money, but manage to surprise and delight their customers at the same time. A challenge, yes, but one that's sure to pay off.





Hue & Cry is a creative and communications agency with expertise in food, drink, and travel. We have offices in London and New York and offer services across strategy, creative, design, experiential and communication.

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