

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Luxury Travel Company Makes a Radical Commitment to Reduce Its Climate Impact

In the year World Travel Market coincided with COP27, longtime bespoke travel leader Brown + Hudson says, enough is enough

London, 17 November 2022 —Last week, as COP27 got under way in Egypt just as World Travel Market opened in London, high-end travel company Brown + Hudson announced that it will cap the number of travelers it sends to any given destination to just 50 people per year.

In 2020 the industry proclaimed that travel would never be the same. Some hoped for a more regenerative approach. And yet, travel has perhaps become even less mindful. There is greater demand from travelers, more pressure on infrastructure and fewer qualified workers.

Something has to change—and soon. “We are on a highway to climate hell with our foot still on the accelerator,” said UN Secretary-General António Guterres in Sharm-El-Sheikh.

Meanwhile, UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili warned that while the sector still has time for positive change, “our door of opportunity won’t stay open forever. We have to do more and do better—we have no time to waste.”

Whilst tourism might not be the biggest contributor to climate change, the global industry’s impact is significant. And we are witnessing its results firsthand. Unprecedented and devastating effects of climate change are already affecting countries that welcome our clients, including India, the USA, the Maldives, China, Europe, South Korea, Cuba and South Africa.

“The industry needs to lead by example.” says Philippe Brown, founder of Brown + Hudson, noting that the sector alone cannot solve the world’s problems. “However, we are in the very privileged position of being able to take action, and this is what we must now do.”

How will this cap work? Starting immediately Brown + Hudson will send a maximum of 50 people to any country per year. One of the great positives of this approach is that will give Brown + Hudson’s experience designers the kind creative freedom that exists within constraint. “If someone desperately wants to go to Tanzania now, our designers will explore their reasons and suggest alternatives that might even better satisfy those needs.” says Brown.

It's a logical extension of the initiatives that the industry leader has already been refining, such as using a science-based approach to get travelers to think deeply about the *why* of travel and not simply the *when, where* and *how*. Brown + Hudson's methods to encourage travelers to think about themselves as travelers, becoming better travelers along the way. And what better way to be become better besides opening their minds to alternative destinations?

There are precedents for this kind of radical initiative. To reduce local impact, Bhutan has for many years managed the number of visitors to the Kingdom, and recently went further with a hefty daily visitor fee. To spend time on Brazil's pristine Fernando de Noronha island, visitors have long paid a daily environmental preservation tax. And Hawai'i is actively considering a 'green fee' to mitigate visitor impacts.

Some have gone further still. In 2019 outdoor apparel brand Patagonia updated its mission statement to "We're in business to save our planet". CEO Rose Marcario added, "We don't just seek now to do less harm, we need to do more good,".

So could the whole travel industry do more good? Could we take an infinite view of the impact of travel and tourism and view our 'product' as a finite resource?

Brown + Hudson thinks the answer is yes. The company has a history of tangible actions to reduce climate impact, such as recommending luxury trains instead of planes, filtered local mineral water rather than imported mineral water, and offering limited changes of sheets and towels as a default, rather than some 'green' program for guests to opt into.

Meanwhile, since 2021, the company has recommended that clients plan far in advance. It is already designing custom itineraries for 2024. The new initiative is another reason for clients to think strategically—but also open-mindedly—about their travels and what they want to achieve.

"Sure, this will have an impact on our bottom line," admits Brown. "But the bigger bottom line is that in the context of climate change and overtourism, we need to be more responsible and regenerative in our approach." It is his hope that other companies will follow this 'dare to be different' example.

Whilst seeking inspiration for a client project, Brown recently dipped into Cormack McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses*. One line in particular stood out: "Between the wish and the thing the world lies waiting." We can't wait for activists or politicians; we must do whatever we can, starting now. Never has this been more true.

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Brown + Hudson

Based in London and with a global network, Brown + Hudson is an experience design company, a team of thinkers and creatives creating exquisitely crafted, richer travel stories.

Over 26 years of travel expertise, ongoing research and scientific insights from world-leading authorities, academics and universities form the foundation of every physical or virtual travel experiences they design.

They apply rigorous logistical expertise from hundreds of journeys executed for thousands of the world's most demanding clients in the most stunning, remote and challenging environments.

Each year they take on only a handful of new clients. The experience design techniques they apply, what they teach clients about the art and science of travel, all contribute to them practically guaranteeing positive outcomes from their work.

They apply their curious minds to reimagining the world specifically for each client to create ultra-personal experiences. Brown + Hudson is utterly creative, insightful and incomparably memorable. Impossible to duplicate.