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April Fool's, the sequel: Travel that comes to you, complete with souvenirs and 'Eau de Souq'

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Friday, March 31, 2017
Posted by Travelweek Group

LONDON — Luxury travel company Brown + Hudson says its new service, 'A Journey Around my Room', "provides all the benefits of travel without any of the inconveniences", for just £150,000.

Philippe Brown, Founder of Brown + Hudson, says the idea was "inspired by a client who would commission us to design the most incredible trips, pay and then cancel at the last minute, to the disappointment of their family. So we decided to bring the destination to them."

Strange though it may seem, it is possible to experience all of the psychological and physical benefits of travel without even leaving home, he added.

"People travel in search of different things: learning, the exotic, adventure, escape, relaxation, curiosity, breaking routine, celebration, challenge and even anonymity. Brown + Hudson's understanding of how travel satisfies these motivations allows them to recreate intensely memorable cultural experiences anywhere. Vietnam in London, India in Toronto, Morocco in Paris, Bhutan in Buenos Aires."

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The company begins by confirming hotel reservations, just in case. They then create a 'Brown Box' that the client will receive. This includes Oculus Rift VR headsets pre-loaded with destination footage, a week of menus and a Moroccan chef to faithfully recreate the street food of Fez at home, for example. "To titillate the senses you'll receive a rare fragrance 'Eau de Souq'. If the missed trip was to the Galapagos or a safari, after-hours access to a wildlife reserve might be arranged with an expert like Randal Keynes, Charles Darwin's great grandson."

Busy executives who want their colleagues to think they are travelling, when in fact they are catching up on work at home, have been flocking to 'Journey Around my Room', says Brown. "For them, the company provides clothing bearing the fragrance of the destination, souvenirs, Photoshopped snaps, drone footage of 'where they were', anecdotes, postcards sent to friends, geo-tagged social media posts and signed copy of Pierre Bayard's 'How to talk about places you've never been'.

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Of course, they also hold confirmed hotel reservations so that if someone calls them, reception can say that 'X is at the pool'.

"The concept also opens up the benefits of travel to people who find travel deeply challenging. There is the hassle of preparation, possible fear of flying and jet lag. When they get there, there are language barriers, loss of control, unfamiliarity and unusual foods and people. And then there's the emotional rollercoaster of coming home. All of that can be avoided with 'A Journey Around my Room'."

A poor silly fad? Brown says he "thinks not".

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