

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Green is new gold for luxury Chinese travelers

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*All eyes on China. Image credit: The Luxury Conversation*

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Last month saw ILTM China arrive in Shanghai, China. The first solely Chinese-focused iteration of the event comes after strong demand for a dedicated China version, with the market now too large to be just part of ILTM Asia.

Because in case you missed it, **Chinese outbound and domestic travel is booming.**

There is a high chance that, after China's "Golden Week" of national holidays at the start of October, you read that hundreds of millions of Chinese people traveled here, there and everywhere. These big numbers make for easy headlines, yet mean very little.

China specializes in big numbers, such as the **"32 percent of luxury consumption globally is from China"** stat that gets rolled out in every related article or event.

If your brand's C-suite is not already crystal clear on the power of Chinese luxury travelling spend, then it should send red flags flying, in both senses of the term. And with this undeniable premise accepted, the real question is: what do luxury Chinese travelers want?

Child's play

To understand how to engage, capture, delight or any term related to this crucial demographic, there should first be understanding of what these terms really mean.

Chinese society is constantly evolving, regional travel preferences continually develop, and the very definition of luxury itself has been reinvented.

Luxury is no longer restricted to set lifestyles, products or tradition. Luxury is now without borders or boundaries, as evolving Chinese consumers redefine what they see as aspirational, desirable and exquisite, based on **the true meaning of the word.**

The unique composition of Chinese culture today sees family life as a foundation for the luxury lifestyle of Chinese millennials and Gen X-ers.

Luxury brands of all categories clamour to capture **the modern Chinese family** Baby Dior campaigns with toddler KOLs [key opinion leaders], China has the most Burberry kids' stores in the world, and new Chinese parents not only demand but expect special organic food, imported children's furniture, with "baby MBAs" and "Olympic maths" yet more angles on the drive of furthering their mini-me's lifestyle.

As ILTM China opened Oct. 31, Chloe Reuter, CEO of Reuter Communications and co-founder of The Luxury Conversation, presented a new travel report titled "Next-Gen Luxury Leaders: Affluent Chinese Families."

The report, co-published by ILTM China and The Luxury Conversation, was produced by Reuter: Intelligence, the insights division of Reuter Communications.

Speaking to circa 500 affluent respondents across first-tier cities in China, the report revealed fascinating insights into the travel dreams and desires of this crucial demographic, particularly in the area of all things green: sustainability, wellness and health. Here is an exclusive preview into these findings.

Preen clean

The health and wellness industry has been booming in China recently.

Not only do gyms and exercise classes abound, but many categories of luxury involve wellbeing, eco-friendliness and the like into their product and service offering.

Hotels are eager to promote their love of the planet, such as The Middle House in Shanghai boasting a plastic-free pledge, The Peninsula rolling out Lululemon Yoga mass-participation events seemingly each weekend, or The Upper House in Hong Kong opting for electric BMW i3's as their hotel car.

Gucci going fur-free gained enormous traction in China and Kering created an "eco Profit & Loss" application for its customers to track and share their overall eco-do-goodery on a continual basis.

Luxury Chinese consumers are not only eco-aware but keen to demonstrate that they are both conscious, righteous global citizens and have both the knowledge and free time to eat clean, and yoga often. The contemporary selfie is no longer only a facial pout but a full-body shot, post-gym session.

This green and healthy angle is not a mere trend. It is a lifestyle and the same expectations are carried into their travel expectations.

In the travel report survey, respondents were asked how important they viewed a range of points. To the "hotel's commitment to sustainability" and "availability of wellness programs," more than 70 percent of respondents marked these points as "very important."

Travel destination preferences also showed a strong favor towards adventure, the outdoors and places of nature and wilderness.

Among all possible global travel spots, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and France all proved to be highest on the wish-list of affluent Chinese parents to take their child to, and more than 65 percent of respondents had "strong interest" in taking their child on an extreme adventure such as an African exploration and Arctic travel.

Focusing on the health aspect, more than 75 percent of respondents chose "organic food" as "very important" in relation to their preferences for a resort's Kids' Club offering, with education on wellness being a key selection for affluent Chinese parents in terms of what they expect their children to experience at a Kids' Club.

THESE TAKEAWAYS give luxury brands the green light to go full steam or, perhaps, electrically-powered ahead and maximize all aspects of their holiday offering: natural, healthy, eco-friendly and responsible facets which will excite and inspire the new leader of luxury travel.





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