

CARRIER FORECAST: THE SHIFTS DEFINING LUXURY TRAVEL IN 2027



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Luxury travel has undergone a profound evolution. What was once product-led became increasingly experiential before shifting towards more intentional forms of travel. Carrier believes the next chapter is emotional, with travellers placing greater value on the experiences, relationships and personal outcomes a journey creates.

Drawing on emerging booking patterns, advisor insights and changing customer priorities, the forecast reveals how affluent travellers are redefining luxury through more intentional decisions about how they spend their time, money and attention.

From the continued growth of six-figure holidays and the resurgence of trusted travel advisors, to the increasing value placed on wellbeing, ambitious multi-centre journeys and highly immersive travel experiences, the findings reveal a common thread: today's luxury travellers are not seeking more, but better.

Rather than chasing volume, convenience, or trend-led travel, they are prioritising deeper experiences, expert guidance, and meaningful personal outcomes. Luxury is becoming less about what travellers acquire and more about how a journey makes them feel.

"The future of luxury travel isn't being driven by what's fashionable, but by what's valuable," says Natasha Towey, Carrier Managing Director, "We're seeing travellers invest with greater intent, whether that's commissioning a once-in-a-lifetime journey, seeking trusted expertise in an increasingly automated world, or choosing experiences that enrich their wellbeing and relationships. These shifts reflect a broader evolution in what luxury means today."

The end of the bucket list

Why wealthy travellers are no longer saving their dream trips for 'someday'

For years, six-figure holidays were reserved for milestone birthdays, retirement celebrations and once-in-a-lifetime adventures. Today, affluent travellers are increasingly bringing forward those experiences, choosing to enjoy them now rather than waiting for a future occasion.

This shift reflects a broader move away from accumulating possessions and towards collecting experiences. Rather than creating a bucket list, travellers are replacing aspiration with action, investing in highly personalised journeys that deliver unforgettable moments with family and friends.

At Carrier, bookings exceeding £100,000 now account for around 40% of total revenue, with approximately one six-figure booking secured every week. While major life events remain an important driver, travellers are increasingly asking a simpler question: why wait?

Whether that means chartering through Antarctica, private vineyard experiences in Napa Valley or cycling the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix circuit, the idea of reserving extraordinary holidays for later is steadily disappearing.

Carrier insight: *The modern luxury traveller is no longer saving special trips for life milestones. They're making travel the milestone itself.*

The rise of trusted expertise

More choice is creating less confidence

AI, social media and endless online reviews have made travel more accessible than ever. But they have also made decision-making considerably harder.

Luxury travellers are increasingly turning to trusted advisors not because they cannot access information, but because they are overwhelmed by it.

The role of the travel specialist has evolved from gatekeeper to curator, helping clients navigate an increasingly crowded landscape and identify what genuinely suits them rather than what happens to be trending online.

That might mean steering a client away from a destination in favour of somewhere better suited to their interests. It could mean recommending Ischia over Capri, a quieter safari region over a more established reserve, or a lesser-known island over a destination experiencing overtourism. The value lies in judgement, not volume of choice.

Carrier Insight: *In a world of unlimited options, the ultimate luxury is having someone you trust make the right recommendation.*

Wellness becomes wealth

The new status symbol is feeling better

Wellness has, for some time now, extended far beyond spas, fitness programmes and green juices. For today's luxury traveller, well-being has become a form of personal capital: something to actively invest in, protect and improve.

As definitions of success continue to evolve, travellers are increasingly seeking holidays that deliver more than relaxation alone. From longevity programmes and advanced diagnostics to nature-led escapes and sleep optimisation, luxury travel is becoming a vehicle for personal growth and self-investment.

Increasingly, well-being is being viewed not simply as recovery from busy lives, but as an opportunity for growth, reflection, and positive lifestyle change. Travellers are seeking experiences that deliver lasting benefits long after they return home, whether that's improved sleep, stronger family connections, a greater sense of balance or a renewed connection with nature.

In response, the industry continues to broaden its wellness offering. No longer confined to specialist retreats, the category now encompasses wilderness lodges, ranches, immersive

outdoor experiences and expert-led programmes creating new ways for travellers to engage with their well-being.

Designed to help travellers navigate an increasingly complex wellness landscape, Carrier's curated collection REVIVE, launched in July 2026, brings together expert-led experiences spanning diagnostics, longevity, mindfulness, nature and personal transformation.

Since launching, REVIVE has generated almost £600,000 in sales, with an average booking value of nearly £43,000, demonstrating strong demand for expert-led well-being experiences among affluent travellers.

Carrier insight: *As wellness expectations become more sophisticated, luxury travel continues to evolve, offering increasingly personalised and innovative ways for travellers to invest in their long-term wellbeing.*

The return of the grand tour

Luxury travellers are travelling further again

After a period of caution that saw many travellers favour simpler holidays and fewer moving parts, confidence is returning to luxury travel.

Recent geopolitical uncertainty and disruption to global travel routes encouraged some travellers to prioritise single-destination holidays over more complex itineraries. However, Carrier predicts a renewed appetite for ambitious travel in 2027, with early booking trends indicating growing demand for multi-centre itineraries spanning three or more stops.

Rather than choosing between experiences, luxury travellers are increasingly combining them. A single journey might blend cities, coastlines, wilderness and culture, creating a richer, more immersive holiday.

In Canada, travellers are increasingly combining vibrant cities such as Vancouver with wilderness experiences like Clayoquot Wilderness Lodge. Elsewhere, travellers are blending the energy of Cape Town, the dramatic scenery of South Africa's coastline and a safari in the Greater Kruger region before ending their journey on the beaches of Madagascar.

The appeal lies in experiencing the full breadth of a destination, or even multiple destinations, rather than focusing on just one place. In an age of convenience, complexity is becoming a luxury in its own right.

Carrier insight: As confidence returns, travellers are increasingly viewing destinations as chapters within a larger journey rather than standalone holidays.

The hotelification cruise

Luxury cruise is winning over travellers who never considered cruising

Cruise bookings continue to grow, with Carrier cruise business up 27% in 2026.

A significant driver has been the arrival of luxury hotel brands into the sector. Familiar names such as The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection and Four Seasons Yachts are attracting travellers who previously viewed cruise as a separate category from luxury hotels.

These brands offer something many affluent travellers value highly: familiarity. Guests know the service standards, design aesthetics, and overall experience they can expect, while enjoying the freedom to wake up somewhere new without compromising comfort or service, and having to unpack many times.

The Mediterranean continues to generate the strongest demand, accounting for almost half of all Carrier cruise bookings. Meanwhile, hotel-branded yacht experiences have grown from just 1% to 10% of Carrier's cruise bookings, reflecting rising interest in smaller-scale, highly-personalised voyages.

"The expansion of luxury hotel brands into yachting reflects a growing desire among travelers for experiences that are both deeply immersive and highly personalised... It represents a natural evolution of luxury hospitality, where the journey itself becomes as enriching as the destination."

Jeremy McClellan, Vice President, Trade Sales & Support, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection

Carrier insight: The lines between luxury hotels and luxury cruise are becoming increasingly blurred, creating new opportunities for travellers to experience the best of both worlds.

Switzerland's second season

Switzerland is no longer just a winter destination

For decades Switzerland has been synonymous with skiing. Increasingly, however, affluent travellers are discovering the country's appeal long after the snow has melted.

Switzerland has entered Carrier top ten European destinations and has doubled in size compared with 2025. Notably, more than one in five bookings now take place outside the traditional ski season.

Summer travellers are drawn by alpine wellness, hiking, lake experiences, scenic rail journeys and cooler temperatures at a time when much of southern Europe experiences increasingly intense heat. As travellers increasingly look to avoid extreme summer heat elsewhere in Europe, Switzerland is benefitting from its reputation as a refreshing alternative.

The country's appeal also extends beyond single-destination stays. Switzerland records the highest average number of hotels per booking within Carrier's top European destinations, highlighting a growing appetite to explore multiple regions in a single trip.

Carrier insight: Switzerland is evolving from a seasonal destination into a year-round luxury playground.

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Notes to Editors

About Carrier...

Established in 1982, Carrier is one of the UK's leading luxury travel specialists. For more than 40 years, the brand has built its reputation not simply on where it can take people, but on the doors it can open once they arrive.

Operating as a unique blend of luxury tour operator and concierge service, Carrier combines expert destination knowledge with highly personalised support before, during and after travel. Every journey is individually crafted around clients' passions, ambitions and life's most

meaningful moments, from once-in-a-lifetime adventures and multi-centre itineraries to wellness retreats, luxury cruises and family celebrations.

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