

TTG

Short & Sweet: Top tips for luxury European city breaks

BY ROB GILL

A wealth of new hotels and chic options could be on the radar when thinking of where to send clients looking for a city fix.



There are not many surprises when you ask city break specialists about their top-selling destinations in Europe – the big names including Paris, Amsterdam, Barcelona, Venice and Rome all feature prominently.

But smaller cities in Europe are increasingly coming on to the radar for consumers – helped by the growth of airline routes, eye-catching new hotels and prestigious cultural events. While Venice, Rome and Vienna continue to be top sellers for Kirker Holidays, there has also been increased demand for less high-profile cities such as Porto, Bordeaux and The Hague.

Meanwhile, Classic Collection's most popular city breaks include the Spanish options of Seville, Granada and Malaga, alongside perennial favourites such as Amsterdam and Vienna.

Operators are also quick to mention the Maltese capital of Valletta, currently one of two European Capitals of Culture for 2018, alongside Dutch city Leeuwarden. Valletta is not just in the spotlight for its extensive programme of events throughout this year, the city has also seen some significant luxury hotel developments.

Amsterdam has also enjoyed renewed publicity since the start of the twice-daily direct Eurostar train services from London in April, a journey that takes just under four hours.

Another city to watch may be Russia's St Petersburg, which was a major venue for this summer's Fifa World Cup football tournament. Despite all the negative

media publicity about Russia in general this year, St Petersburg remains Regent Holidays' most popular city break. The city could also continue to bask in the positive glow of being part of hosting such a successful World Cup.

Here are five of top European city options for 2018 and beyond:

Palma



Majorca may be better known as a summer beach destination but its historic capital is one of the Mediterranean's most fascinating cities, with landmarks such as the Gothic 13th-century Santa Maria cathedral, the hilltop Bellver Castle and the Royal Palace of La Almudaina.

Palma is also becoming known for its growing number of boutique hotels (now closing in on 30 properties) with another six due to open this year including the 68-room Hotel Es Princep in the Calatrava area close to the city's restored ancient walls.

