



PRESS RELEASE  
January 2019

## 2019, THE YEAR OF PROUD EXPERIENCES

### REED TRAVEL EXHIBITION'S NEW LGBTQ+ TRAVEL SHOW HEADS TO NEW YORK CITY TO SHOW DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION MATTERS IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY

#### TOP LGBTQ+ SPEAKERS AND EDUCATION SESSIONS

[www.proudexperiences.com](http://www.proudexperiences.com)

The debut of PROUD Experiences held in 2018 in London created the first b2b travel and lifestyle event for premium travel suppliers and buyers targeting the LGBTQ+ global community. Its success in an industry which spent \$218 billion last year according to consultancy firm Out Now, has set the scene for US based event that is taking place alongside WorldPride and the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Stonewall uprising, in New York this June.

Hosted at 1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge, the second edition of PROUD Experiences will host **more buyers** from key regions in North America, Europe and Latin America – a 25% growth over the 2018 pilot show. Suppliers are attending from brands that include some of the world's leading hotels, concierge companies, destinations and travel services, all of whom will also be able to learn about the trends and strategies needed in this marketplace to build long term business.

<http://www.proudexperiences.com/exhibitorlist>

Event Director Simon Mayle commenting on how the global LGBTQ+ community can make a difference says: "PROUD Experiences is much more than matchmaking. On top of the appointments diary between suppliers and buyers, there will also be education sessions and networking events. But it's more than just business; it's about embracing diversity in the travel industry and helping push the experiences this community wants, whilst also feeling happy and safe wherever they choose".

Kicking it all off is **The PROUD Gathering**, the official opening event that includes a segment dedicated to the 'Proud Modern Family', with interviews to parent-bloggers **Jonathan Bailey** and **Triton Klugh** from '**2 Dads with Baggage**', and transgender power couple **Hannah and Jake Graf**, followed by **Will Young** and **Chris Sweeney** who will talk about relatable contemporary topics such as anxiety, traumas, conflict resolution and the importance of finding a voice, among others.



The PROUD Gathering will culminate in the presence of **His Royal Highness Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil** – the first openly gay Prince in the world and face of the #FreeGayIndia movement – who will be the Big Stage PROUD Interview.

A series of **Masterclasses** each day will be for everyone to attend, with hard talk topics such as emerging destinations and travel issues; the segments within the LGBTQ+ travel niche; growing revenues from this market and hands-on sensitivity training. Speakers include **Andréa Richardson** – Head of Diversity Relations at Hilton Hotels, who will be using her award-winning experience in a panel format to discuss who is the LGBTQ+ traveller (drilling down on their profile: single/ couples/ families or a mature customer), and what is best practice in targeting and engaging with this community.

**Networking and Parties** are planned as an added opportunity to continue to meet up with friends and make new ones at venues around NYC.

The LGBTQ+ traveller has become a dynamic segment of the industry and a powerful vehicle for business development. Statistics show that travel accounts for 10% of travel spend, they decide on hotels based on two key aspects; price and gay friendly reputation. They on average take some 4-6 trips a year versus 1-2 for other sectors.

Research also shows that 43% of 40+ and 63% of younger groups prefer to book tailor-made holidays through an agency rather than online, supporting the PROUD Experiences hand-picked buyer program.

Among the newest hospitality brands that will be exhibiting at PROUD Experiences there is **Equinox Hotels** – named one of Virtuoso's hottest luxury hotels debuting worldwide this year, totally fitness focused, taking on the health and wellbeing trends of this decade.

**InterContinental Hotels Group** will be back, whose Global Luxury & Lifestyle Sales Director Dennis Grunden said: "I am beyond excited to be returning to PROUD Experiences in New York City! PROUD allows us to connect with the elite travel partners catering to the LGBTQ+ segment. We are proud to be a part of PROUD 2019!"

LGBTQ+ countries with the biggest spending power are the United States with US\$63.1 billion spent in 2018, ahead of Brazil (\$26.8 billion), Japan (\$20.7 billion), Germany (\$13.8 billion), United Kingdom (\$11.7 billion), France (\$11.4 billion), Mexico (\$11.4 billion) and Italy (\$9 billion).

PROUD Experiences will take place at 1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge, New York City, from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

Buyers interested in attending should go to [www.proudexperiences.com](http://www.proudexperiences.com) and apply.



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#### NOTES TO EDITORS

##### About PROUD Experiences

PROUD Experiences is an international travel trade event that brings personally curated buyers and suppliers of travel experiences together through a pre-scheduled appointment system. This event will put the spotlight on a market that now deserves its own attention, with a community that spends over US\$200billion a year on leisure travel. Buyers interested in attending should go to [www.proudexperiences.com](http://www.proudexperiences.com) and apply.

##### About Reed Travel Exhibitions

Reed Travel Exhibitions is the world's leading travel and tourism event's organiser with a growing portfolio of more than 22 international travel and tourism trade events in Europe, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and Africa. Our events are market leaders in their sectors, whether it is global and regional leisure travel trade events, or specialist events for meetings, incentives, conference, events (MICE) industry, business travel, luxury travel, travel technology as well as golf, spa and ski travel. We have over 35 years' experience in organising world-leading travel exhibitions. [www.reedtravelexhibitions.com](http://www.reedtravelexhibitions.com)

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**SPOTLIGHT Communications** is a London-based international public relations agency with global experience of working within the travel, luxury, lifestyle and event sectors.

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