



Diane Bechamps
*Vice President of Marketing
Virginia Tourism Corporation*



Amir Eylon
*President & CEO
Longwoods
International*

Session Speakers



Heidi Johannesen
*Director, Global Marketing and Media
Relations
Virginia Tourism Corporation*



Sheema Vohra
*Managing Director
Sartha Global Marketing
LLP*



Christi Braginton
*Associate Director, Global Media
Relations & Marketing
Virginia Tourism Corporation*



Marjorie Dewey
*President
Connect Worldwide Japan Co.,
Ltd.*



Bri Bélanger-Warner
*Canadian Media Relations & Marketing
Specialist
Virginia Tourism Corporation*



Penny Brand
*Head of Tourism
Development
Gate 7*



Elias Manneh
*Chief Partnership Officer
Ink Global*



Patrick Rodgers
*Director of Product
Tourism Exchange USA*

**VIRGINIA
IS FOR
LOVERS®**

**SUPER SESSION:
STRATEGIES TO
TARGET THE
INTERNATIONAL
VISITOR**

November 2024



Amir Eylon

President & CEO

Longwoods International

A 35-year veteran of the Travel & Tourism industry, Amir Eylon is President & CEO of Longwoods International, a premier market research consultancy that specializes in the travel and tourism industry. In this role, he oversees all aspects of daily operations, thought leadership, product & business development, and partnerships for this recognized brand in tourism market research.

Amir joined Longwoods international in 2015 from his previous role as Vice President, Partner Engagement with Brand USA, the public-private partnership serving as the destination marketing organization dedicated to increasing international visitation to the US. He led the team responsible for helping to increase its partnership base and focused on exceeding service expectation for those partners. During his tenure, Brand USA grew its base from 15 to over 475 partners, comprised of destination marketing organizations, state tourism offices, attractions, hotels, travel brands, airlines, and tour operators.

Prior to joining Brand USA, Amir served as Director of the Ohio Office of Tourism. Under his leadership, the state's marketing programs realized a tremendous return on investment and contributed to the growth of the state's then \$40 billion tourism economy. These successful marketing efforts were often cited as the basis for the program's many awards and recognitions during his tenure.

He has also served as President of the Ohio Hotel & Lodging Association, Assistant Director of the Ohio Tourism Division, and Sales & Marketing Manager with the Steuben County Conference and Visitors Bureau.

Amir is a regular speaker on market research and tourism at conferences and events around the country. His thoughts on the tourism industry and travel trends are often quoted in the media, and he has appeared in dozens of interviews among many national media outlets such as CNBC, MSNBC, Forbes, the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Los Angeles Times.

Amir has been recognized with a number of Industry honors including Top 25 Extraordinary Minds in Sales & Marketing award (2014) by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International (HSMAI); The Ohio Tourism Industry's Highest Honor, The Paul Sherlock Award; and The State of Ohio Distinguished Service Medal. He is an active member of many Travel Industry committees and task forces, and currently serves on boards for the Destinations International Foundation and the U.S. Travel Association.

Amir holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Dayton and resides in Columbus, OH with his wife and two children.

A silhouette of a person wearing a cap and a backpack, standing on a rocky outcrop and operating a camera on a tripod. The scene is set against a sunset sky with a bright sun low on the horizon. A white heart icon is positioned in front of the person's legs.

First Up... The Research!

WARNING! I Have A Lot Of Content...

And Only Seven Minutes!!!



- **I DO NOT** get paid by the slide!
- **I WILL** move quickly!
- This presentation **WILL** be made available to you!
- So sit back, relax, & just listen...



WHO WE ARE

Established in 1978 as a market research consultancy

Headquartered in Columbus, OH and Toronto, ON

Focused in tourism since 1985

Working with over 175 Destinations and Brands



PROJECT OVERVIEW

Longwoods was engaged to conduct a program of research designed to measure and understand perceptions of Virginia in key international markets: Canada, United Kingdom, Germany.

This study specifically profiled:

- Key travel motivators for Virginia
- Image of Virginia in the areas that are important to travelers in key target markets
 - Virginia image versus its product delivery
 - Virginia's image strengths and weaknesses versus competitors
 - Awareness of Virginia's logo

Sample Markets + Respondent Distribution

United Kingdom (700), Germany (701), & Canada (Quebec 301, Ontario 400)

Qualified respondents are **adult travelers*** and members of major online consumer research panel.

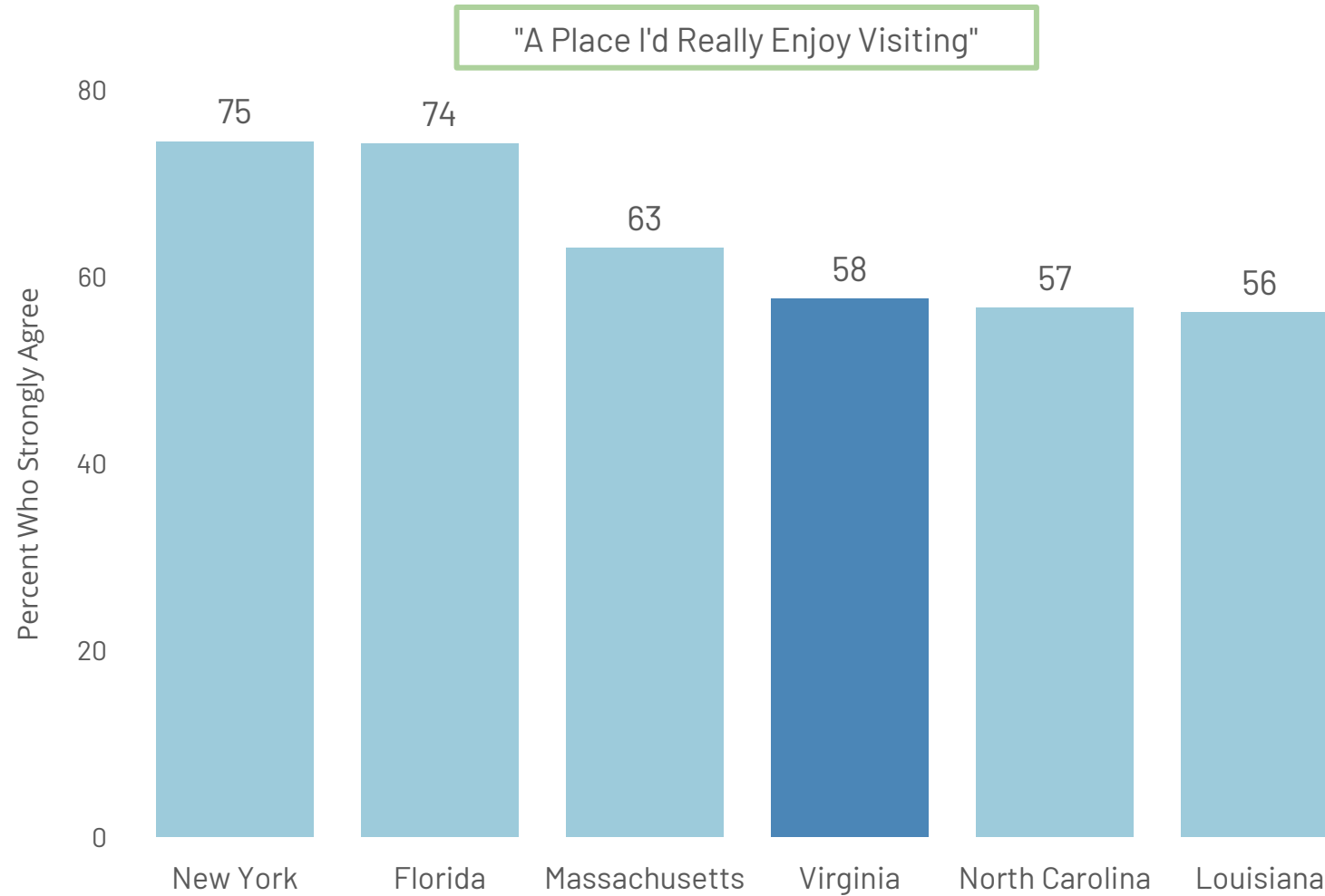
*Adults 35 years of age or older who have taken an overnight leisure trip to the U.S. in the past 4 years and intend to travel to the U.S. on a leisure trip in the next 2 years.

Virginia 2023 International Image Research: United Kingdom



OVERALL IMAGE VS. COMPETITION

Base: United Kingdom



Relative to the other destinations in the competitive set for this study, Virginia has a positive overall image among travelers. In the U.K., about six in ten (58%) rated Virginia very favorably as a destination they "would really enjoy visiting." Tied with North Carolina (57%) and Louisiana (56%) for third place, behind New York (75%), Florida (74%), and Massachusetts (63%).

INTENT TO VISIT IN NEXT 12 MONTHS

Base: United Kingdom



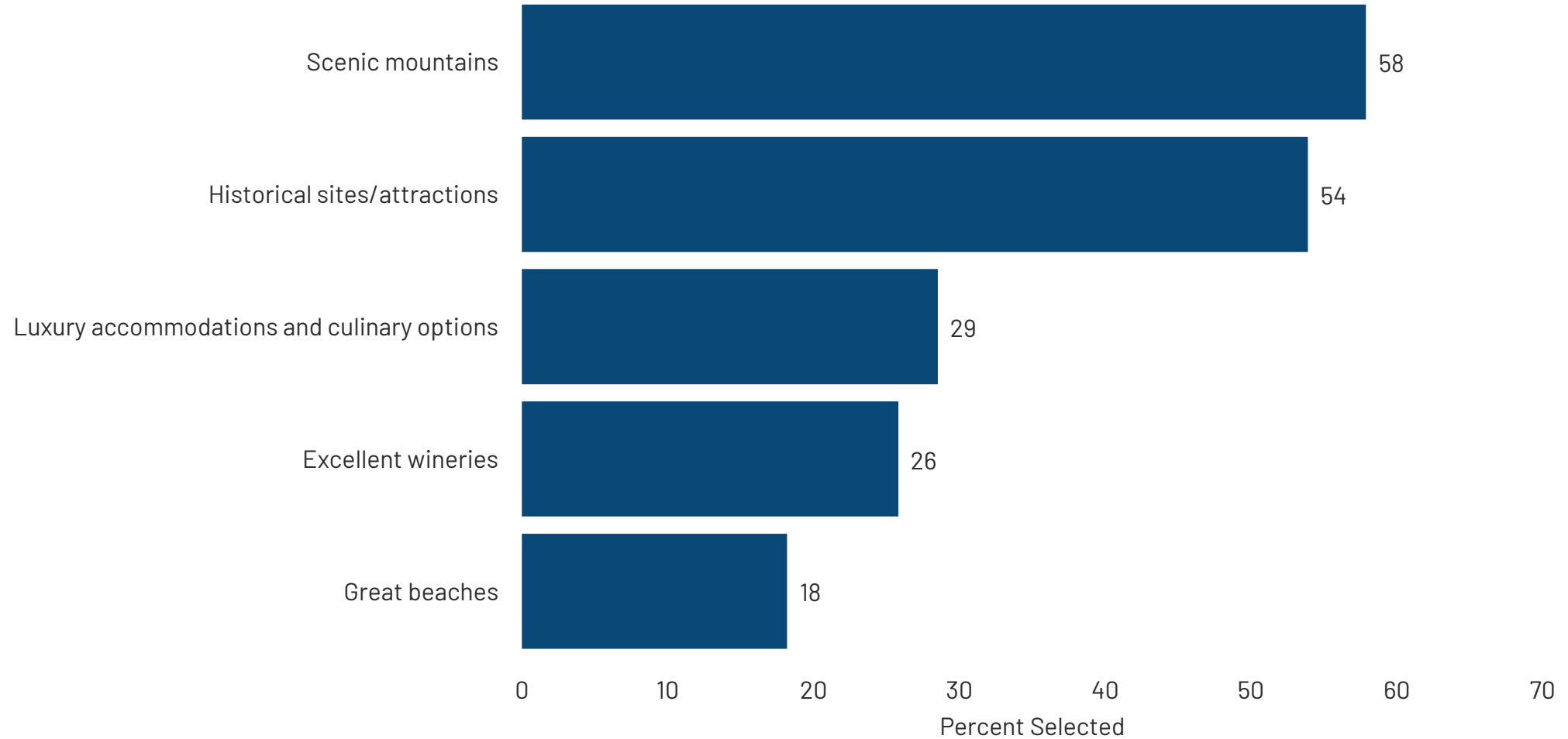
28% of respondents intend to visit Virginia during the next 12 months.

	Probably Will or Definitely Will Visit Destination in Next 12 Months*
Florida	56%
New York	50%
Louisiana	29%
Massachusetts	29%
Virginia	28%
North Carolina	27%

*On an overnight leisure trip

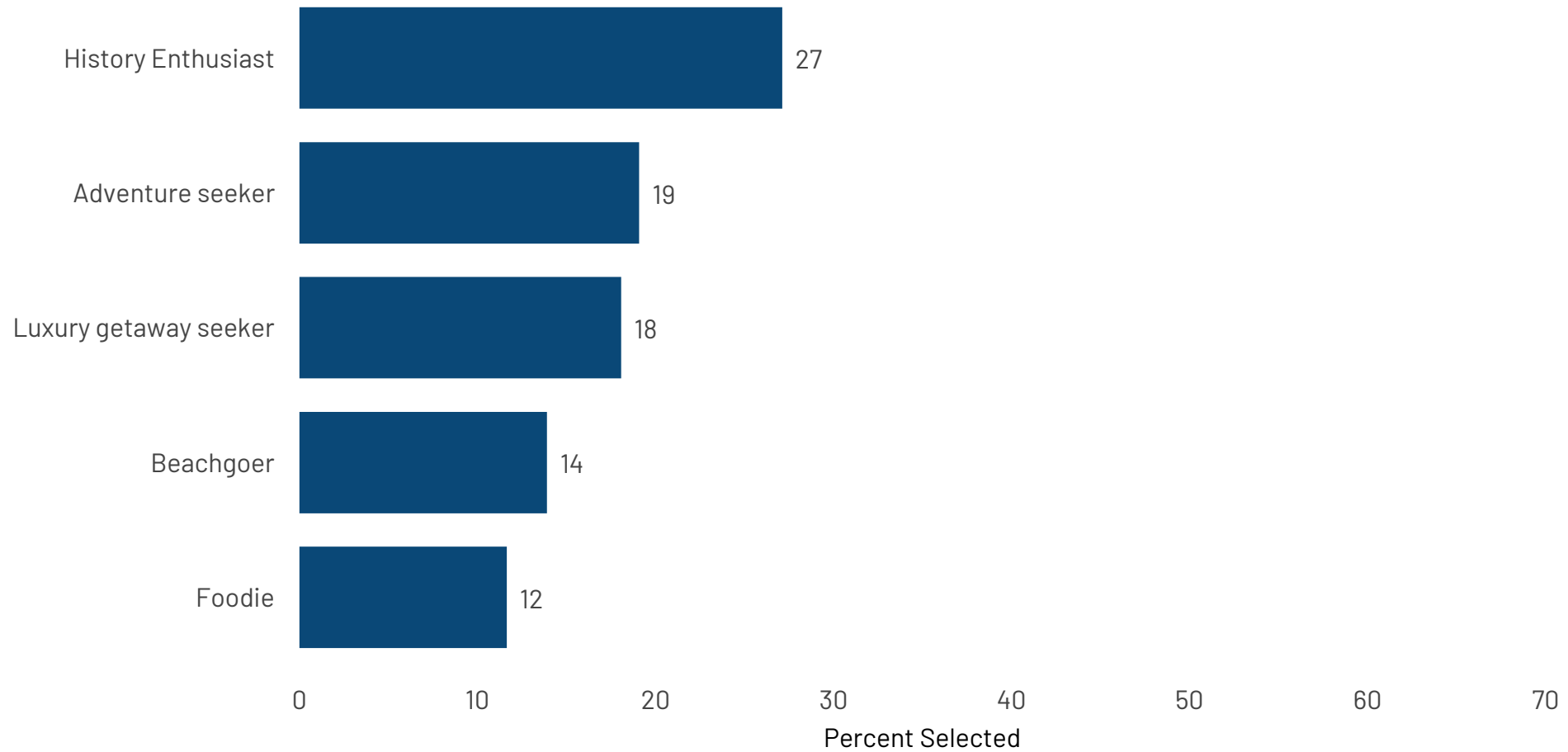
WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF VIRGINIA?

Base: United Kingdom



WHAT TYPE OF TRAVELER ARE YOU?

Base: United Kingdom



TRAVEL MOTIVATORS

U.K.'s Travel Motivators

For a destination in the U.K. to get on travelers' consideration list, it must, first and foremost, be perceived to:

Be exciting – be seen as exciting, fun, and a place everyone should visit at least once.

Other factors of moderate importance include:

Good for luxurious vacations and accommodations.

Be adult/family friendly – be seen as a good place for families and couples to visit.

Uniqueness – provides a unique vacation experience, noted for its unique local cuisine.

Popular – a well-known destination that has well-known landmarks.

Worry free – a place they would feel welcome, good for relaxation, sustainable and/or green travel, and safe to travel anywhere in the state.

Great sightseeing – lots of things to see and do, truly beautiful scenery, known for its diversity of landscape

Affordability includes being an excellent vacation value for the money, accommodations, getting to and considering the distance to the destination.

Recreation – a great place for outdoor activities and golfing

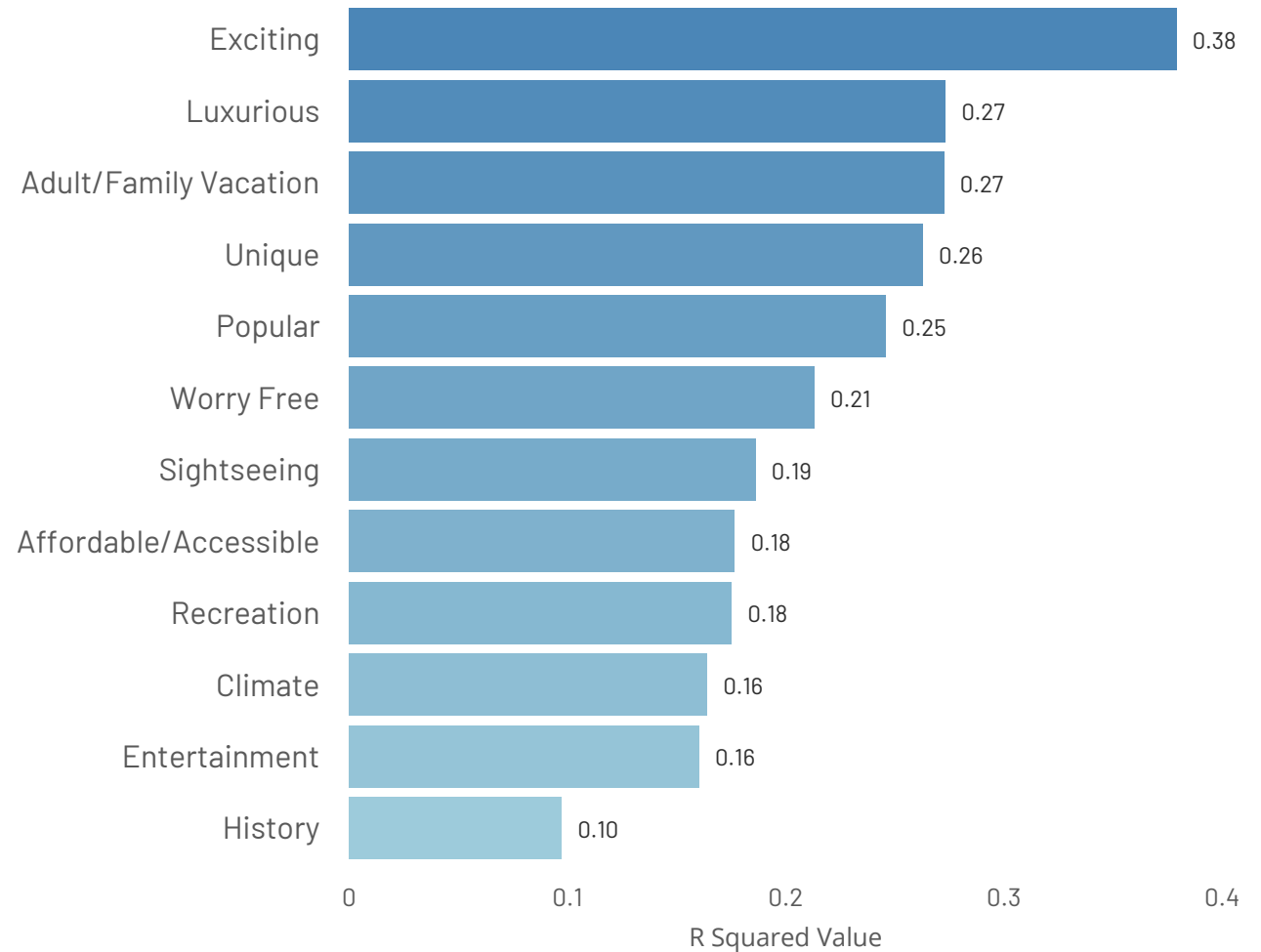
Lower priorities are:

A good climate overall

Good opportunities for entertainment – interesting festivals/fairs/events, and known for wineries/breweries/distilleries

History – known for its historical significance, and as a place to learn about American music history.

Base: United Kingdom

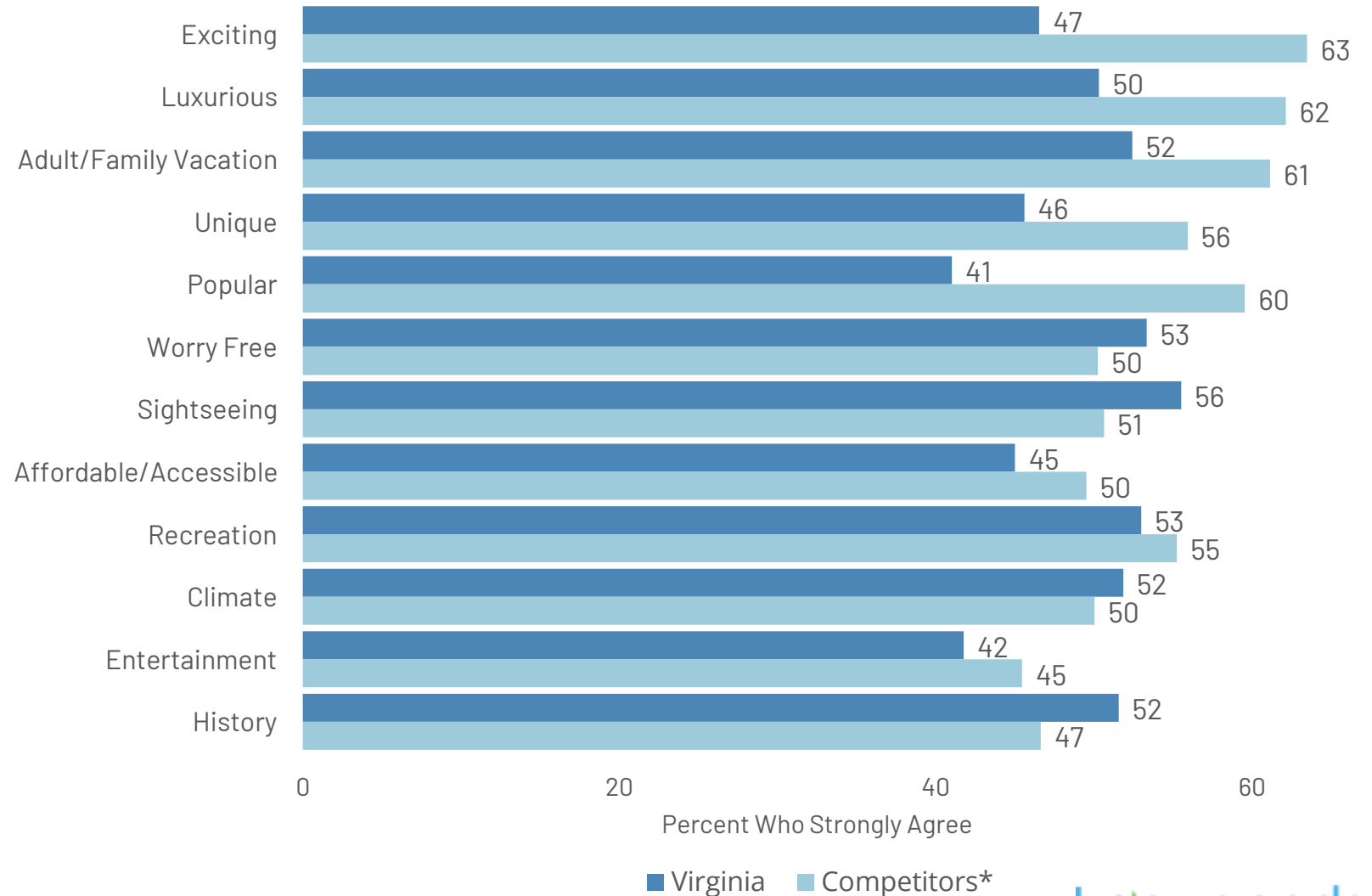


*Correlations are a measure of the degree of association between each factor and whether Virginia is a place "I'd really enjoy visiting."

OVERALL IMAGE VS. COMPETITION

Base: United Kingdom

Virginia did not perform positively overall against its competitive set for the twelve Travel Motivators in this study. Against its competitive set, Virginia garnered four Travel Motivators within the margin of error, a virtual tie for each, and underperformed in six in total. The two Travel Motivators that Virginia outperformed its competitive set are *Sightseeing & History* – ahead by five points each.



* Includes Massachusetts, Louisiana, New York, North Carolina, and Florida

Base: United Kingdom



Hot Buttons are the ten individual image attributes most closely tied to destination selection for travelers in the U.K.*

Hot buttons are high on a traveler's 'wish list' when selecting a destination they'd really enjoy visiting.

HOT BUTTONS

An exciting place

A fun place for a vacation

Provides a unique vacation experience

Lots of things to see and do

A place I would feel welcome

A place everyone should visit at least once

Good place for a luxurious vacation

Good for couples

Good place for families to visit

Luxurious accommodations

*Based on strongest correlation value to "A place I'd really enjoy visiting"

IMAGE STRENGTHS VS. COMPETITION

Base: United Kingdom



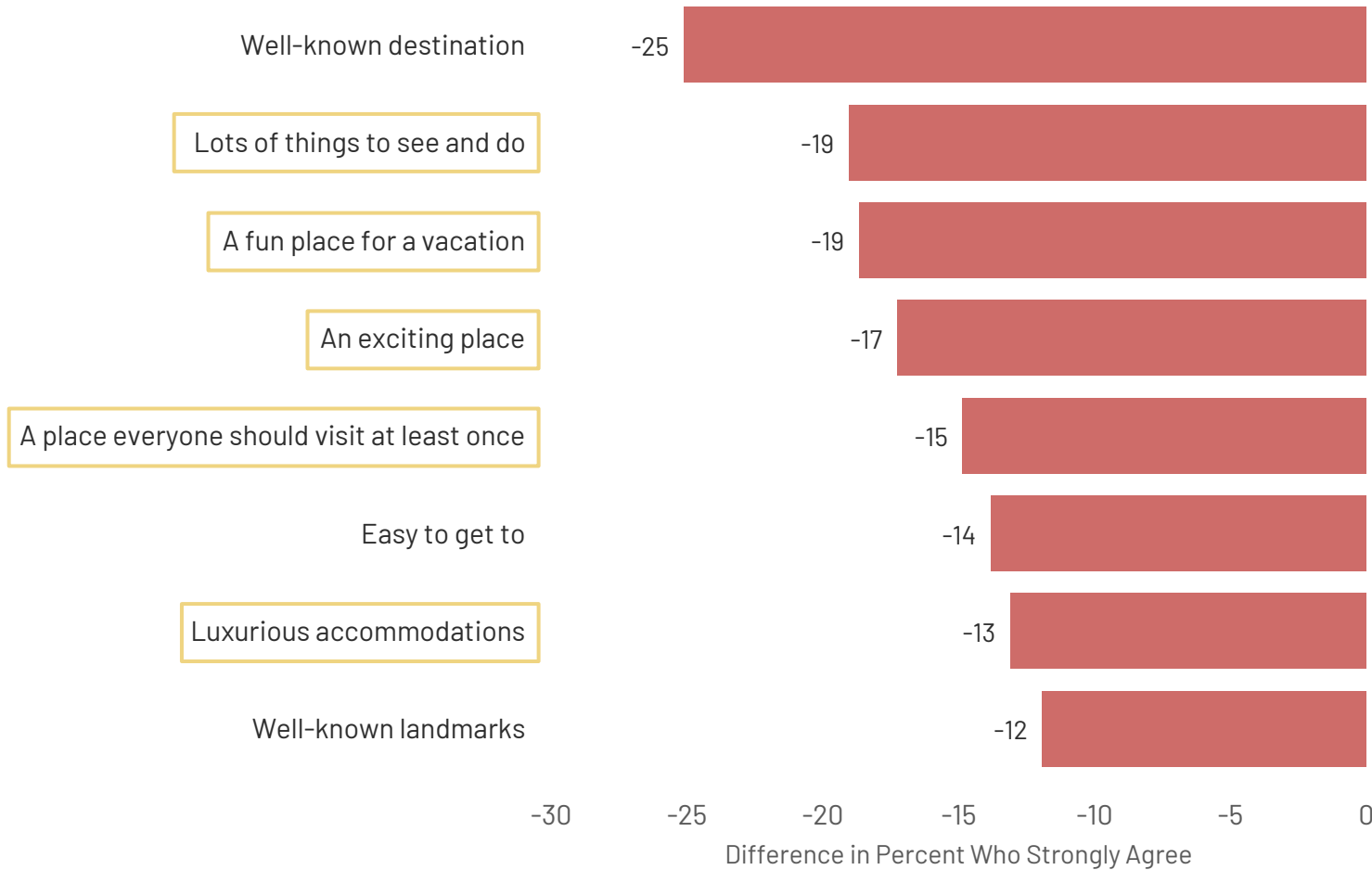
When comparing Virginia's image versus the image of the combined competition, Virginia's top image strengths are related to:

- Known for its diversity of landscape, from oceans to mountains
- Truly beautiful scenery
- Known for its historical significance
- Known for its scenic road trips
- A good place for sustainable and/or green travel
- A good contract of seasons



IMAGE WEAKNESSES VS. COMPETITION

Base: United Kingdom



There are fourteen image weaknesses that Virginia has versus its competitive set. The Hot Buttons within these weaknesses are:

- Lots of things to see and do
- A fun place for a vacation
- An exciting place
- A place everyone should visit at least once
- Luxurious accommodations
- Good place for a luxurious vacation
- Provides a unique vacation experience
- Good place for families to visit
- Good for couples

Hot Button

Virginia 2023

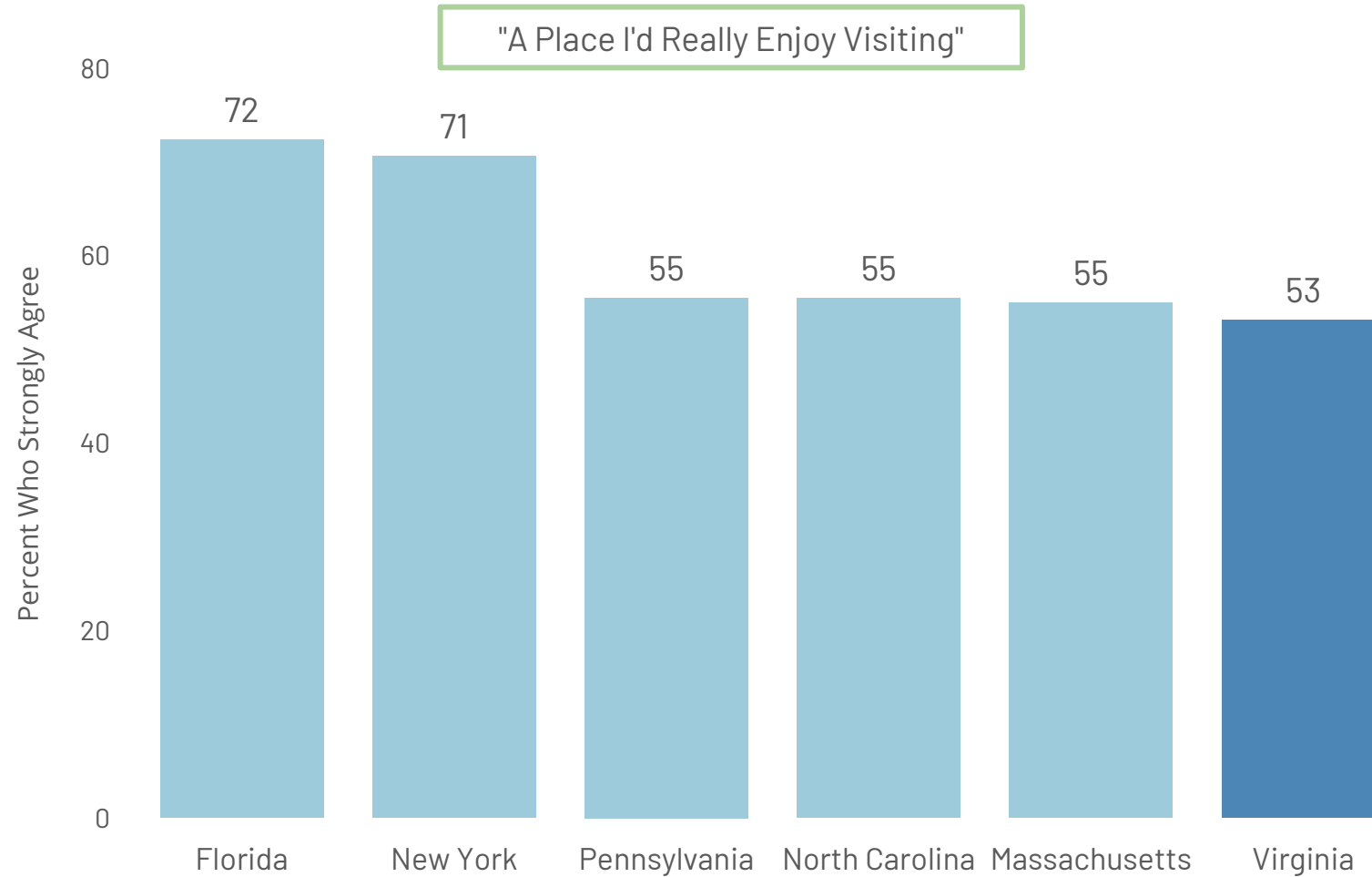
International Image Research:

Germany



OVERALL IMAGE VS. COMPETITION

Base: Germany



Relative to the other destinations in the competitive set for this study, Virginia has a balanced overall image among travelers. In Germany, about half (53%) rated Virginia very favorably as a destination they "would really enjoy visiting." Tied with Pennsylvania (55%), North Carolina (55%), and Massachusetts (55%) for third place, behind Florida (72%) and New York (71%).

INTENT TO VISIT IN NEXT 12 MONTHS

Base: Germany



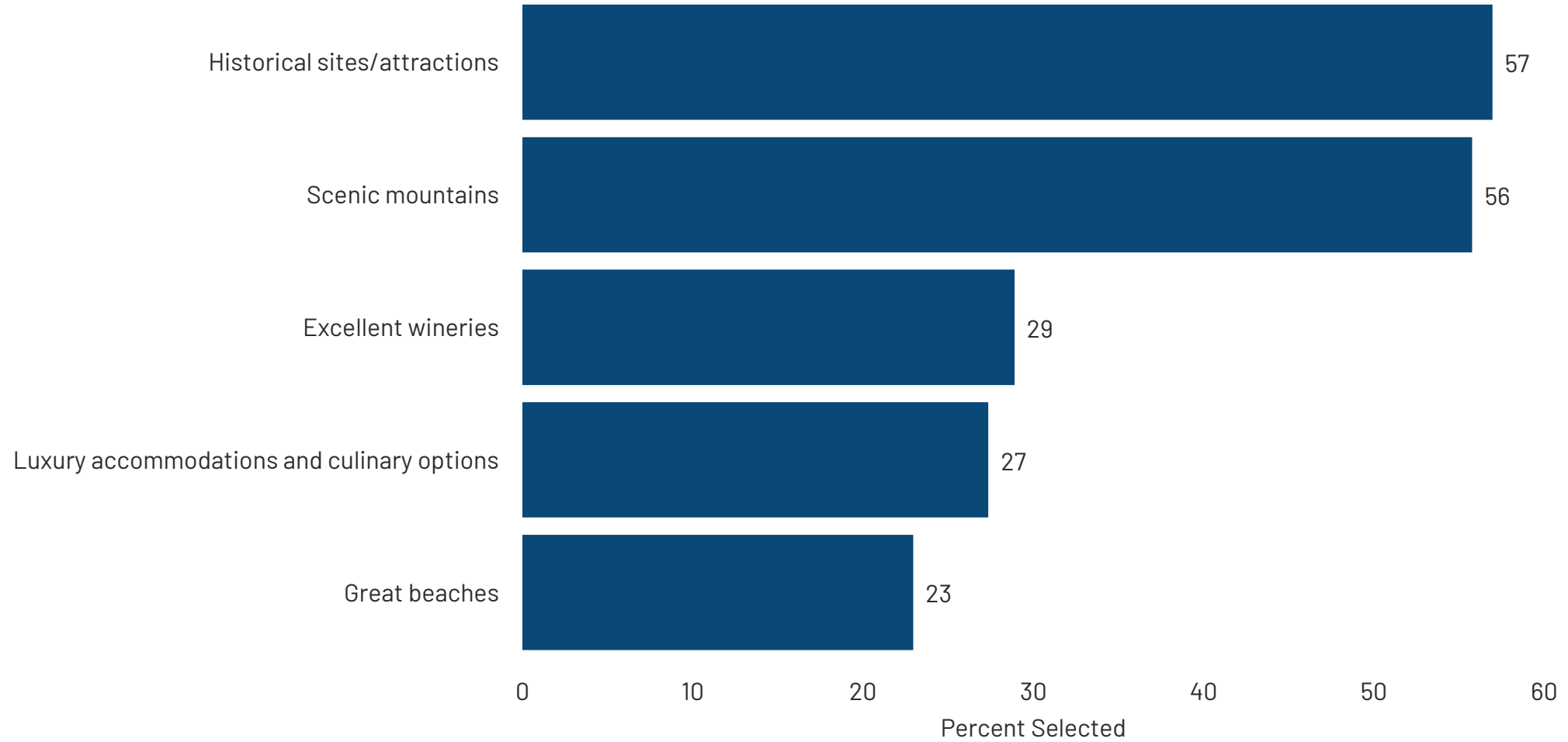
46% of respondents intend to visit Virginia during the next 12 months.

	Probably Will or Definitely Will Visit Destination in Next 12 Months*
New York	66%
Florida	66%
Massachusetts	48%
Pennsylvania	47%
Virginia	46%
North Carolina	44%

*On an overnight leisure trip

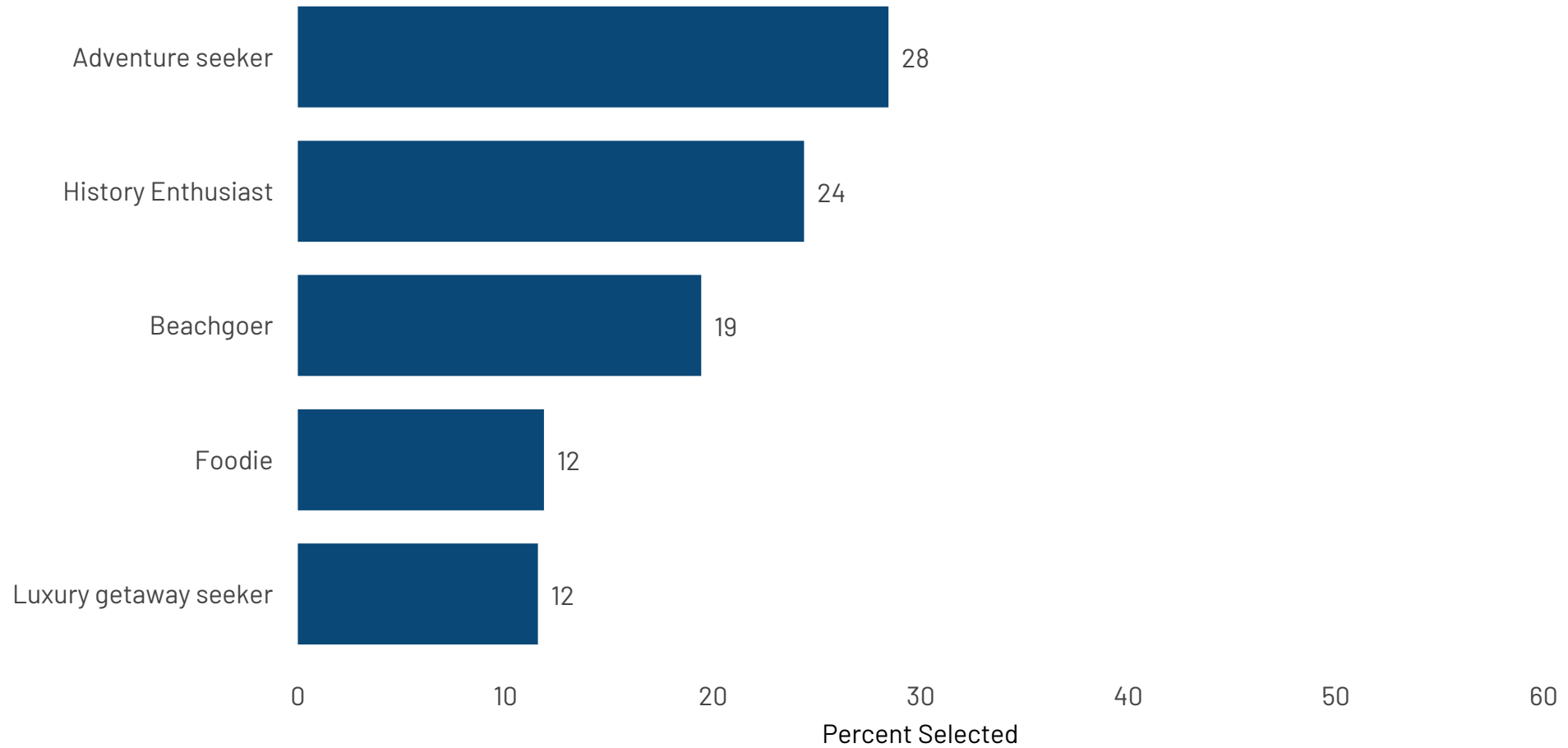
WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF VIRGINIA?

Base: Germany



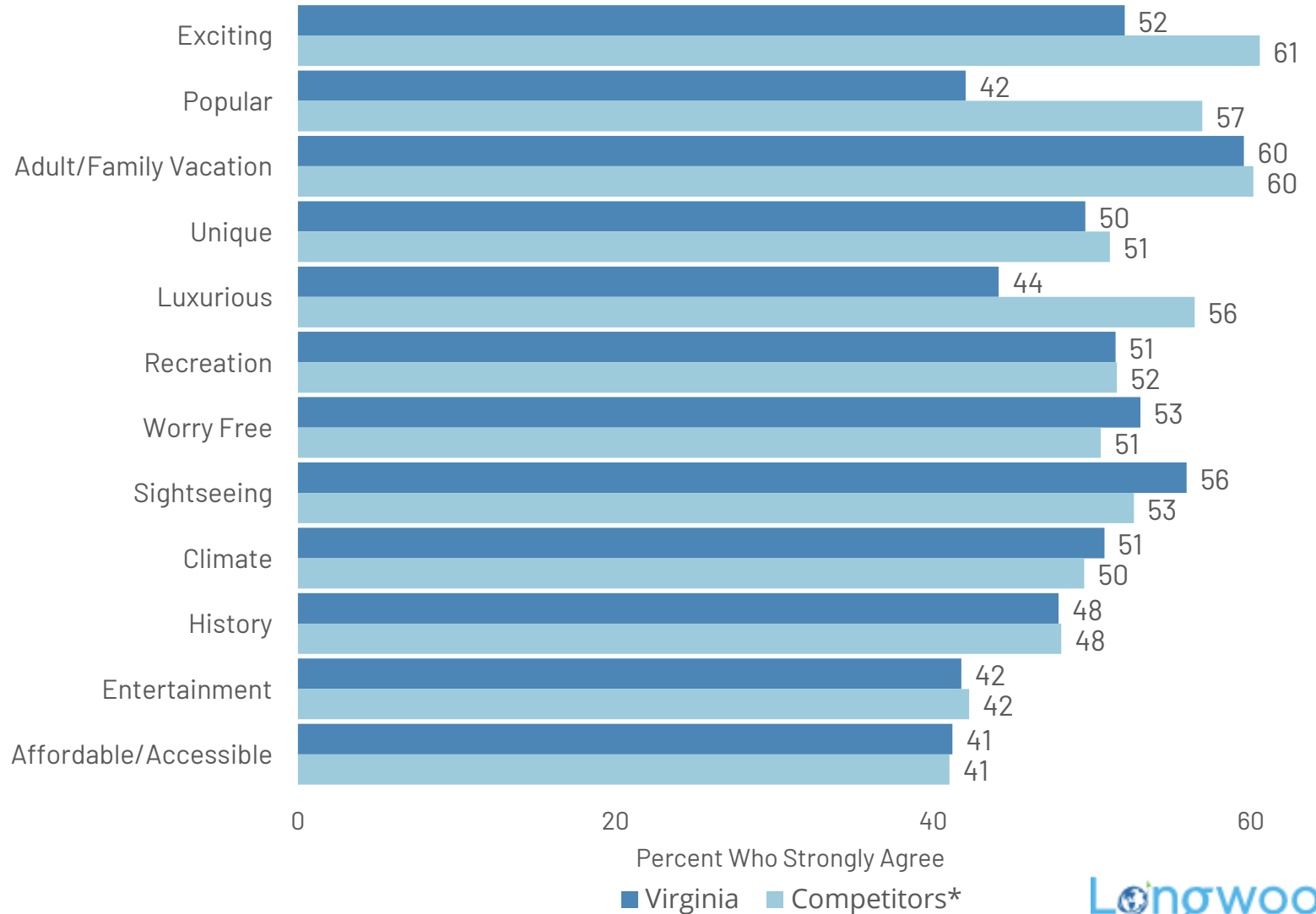
WHAT TYPE OF TRAVELER ARE YOU?

Base: Germany



OVERALL IMAGE VS. COMPETITION

Base: Germany



Virginia performed comparably overall against its competitive set for the twelve Travel Motivators in this study. Against its competitive set, Virginia garnered nine Travel Motivators within the margin of error, a virtual tie for each, and underperformed for three in total. Virginia did not overperform for any Travel Motivators versus its competitive set.

* Includes Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, New York, and Florida

IMAGE STRENGTHS VS. COMPETITION

Base: Germany



When comparing Virginia's image versus the image of the combined competition, Virginia's top image strengths are related to:

- Truly beautiful scenery
- Known for its diversity of landscape, from oceans to mountains
- Affordable accommodations
- Known for wineries/breweries/distilleries



IMAGE WEAKNESSES VS. COMPETITION

Base: Germany



There are ten image weaknesses that Virginia has versus its competitive set. The Hot Buttons within these weaknesses are:

- Well-known destination
- Good place for luxurious vacation
- An exciting place
- Lots of things to see and do
- A place everyone should visit at least once
- A fun place for a vacation

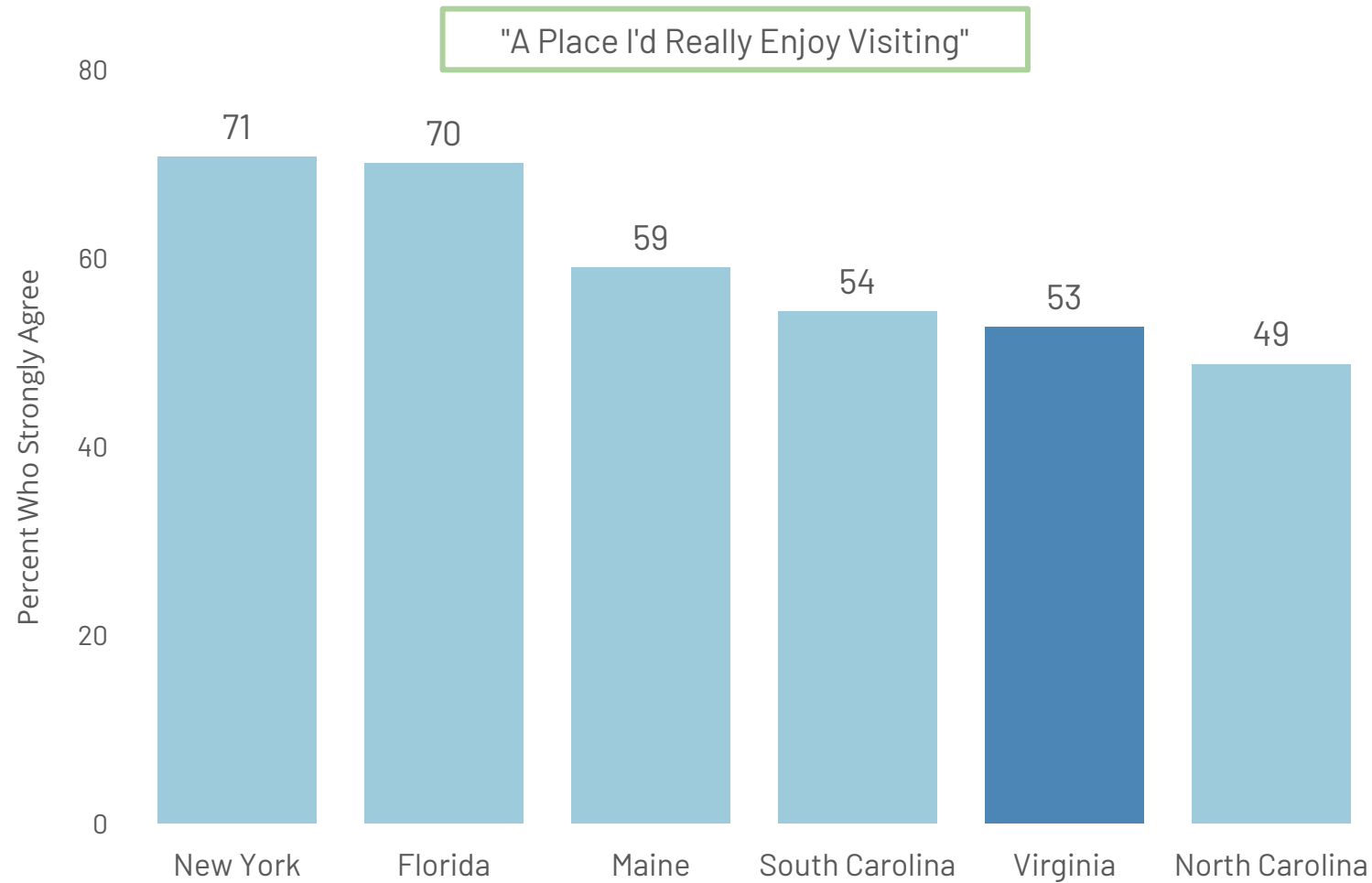
Hot Button

Virginia 2023 International Image Research: Canada



OVERALL IMAGE VS. COMPETITION

Base: Canada



Relative to the other destinations in the competitive set for this study, Virginia has a balanced overall image among travelers. In Canada, about half (53%) rated Virginia very favorably as a destination they "would really enjoy visiting." Tied with South Carolina (54%) for third place, behind New York (71%), Florida (70%), and Maine (59%), and ahead of North Carolina (49%).

INTENT TO VISIT IN NEXT 12 MONTHS

Base: Canada



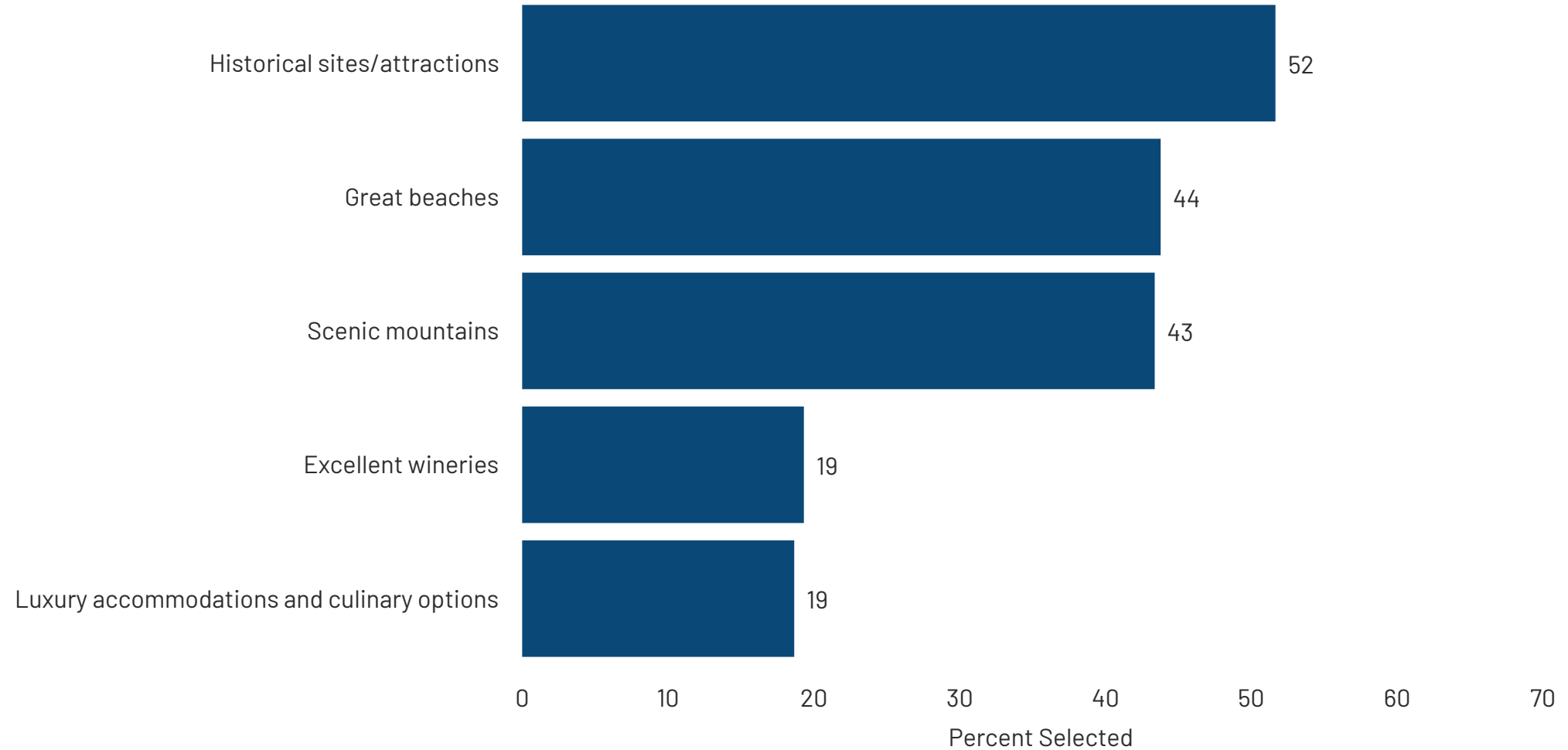
27% of respondents intend to visit Virginia during the next 12 months.

	Probably Will or Definitely Will Visit Destination in Next 12 Months*
Florida	59%
New York	54%
South Carolina	31%
Maine	30%
North Carolina	28%
Virginia	27%

*On an overnight leisure trip

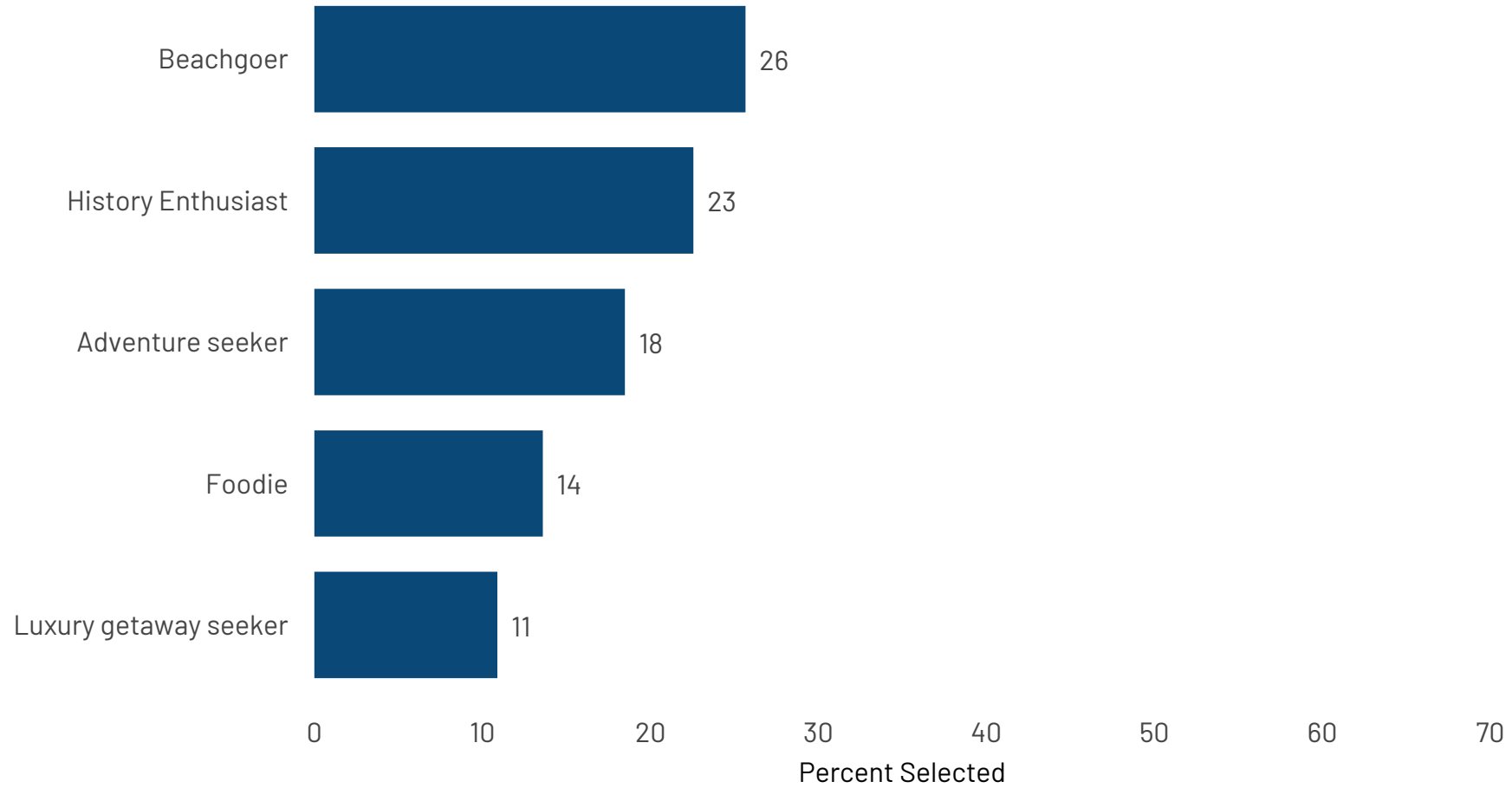
WHAT IMAGES COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF VIRGINIA?

Base: Canada



WHAT TYPE OF TRAVELER ARE YOU?

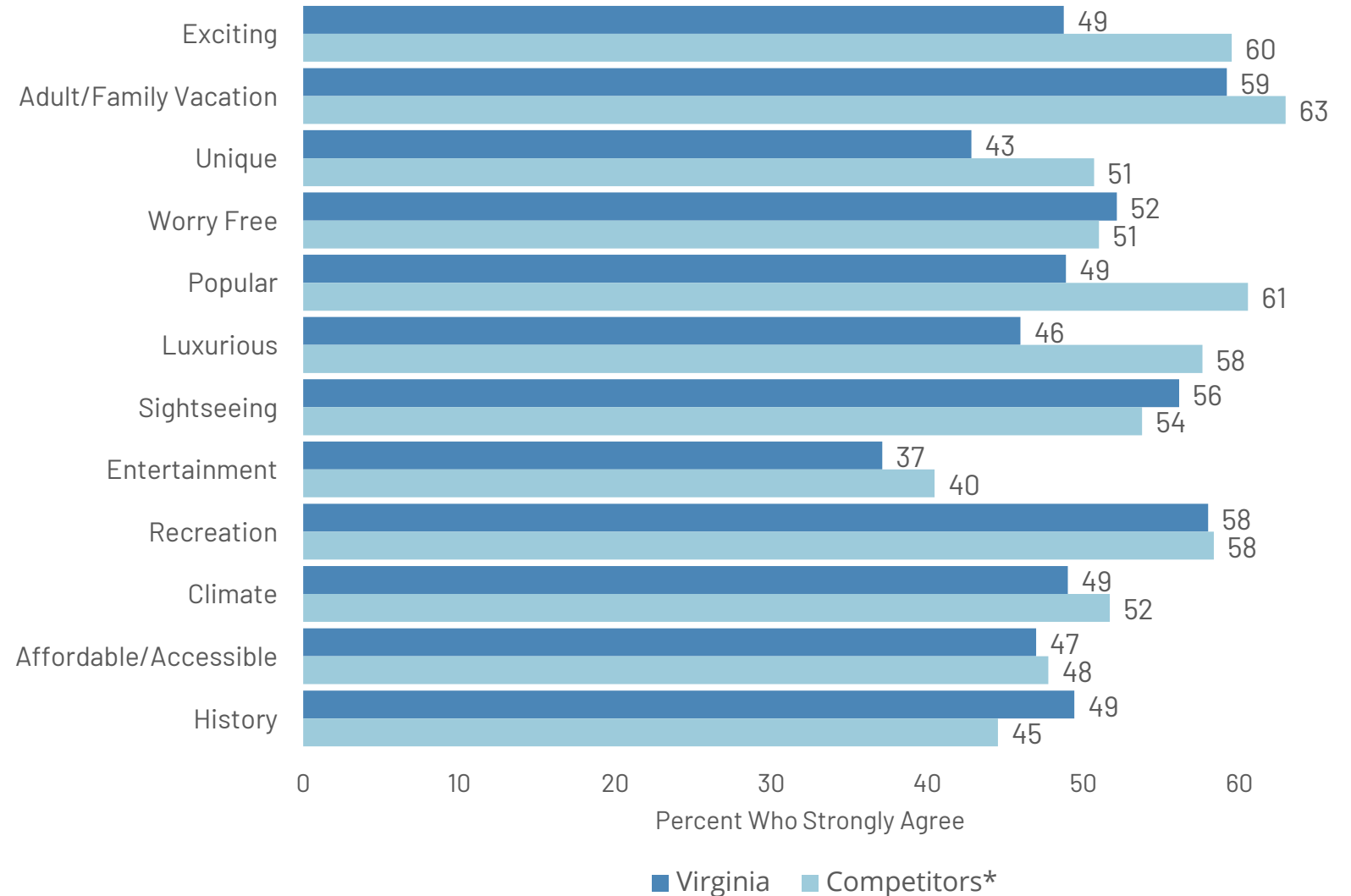
Base: Canada



OVERALL IMAGE VS. COMPETITION

Base: Canada

Virginia performed unvarying overall against its competitive set for the twelve Travel Motivators in this study. Against its competitive set, Virginia garnered six Travel Motivators within the margin of error, a virtual tie for each, and underperformed in five in total. The one Travel Motivator that Virginia outperformed its competitive set was *History*, ahead by four points.



* Includes Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, New York, and Maine

IMAGE STRENGTHS VS. COMPETITION

Base: Canada



When comparing Virginia's image versus the image of the combined competition, Virginia's top image strengths are related to:

Known for its historical significance

Known for its scenic road trips

Truly beautiful scenery

A great destination to explore by motorcycle

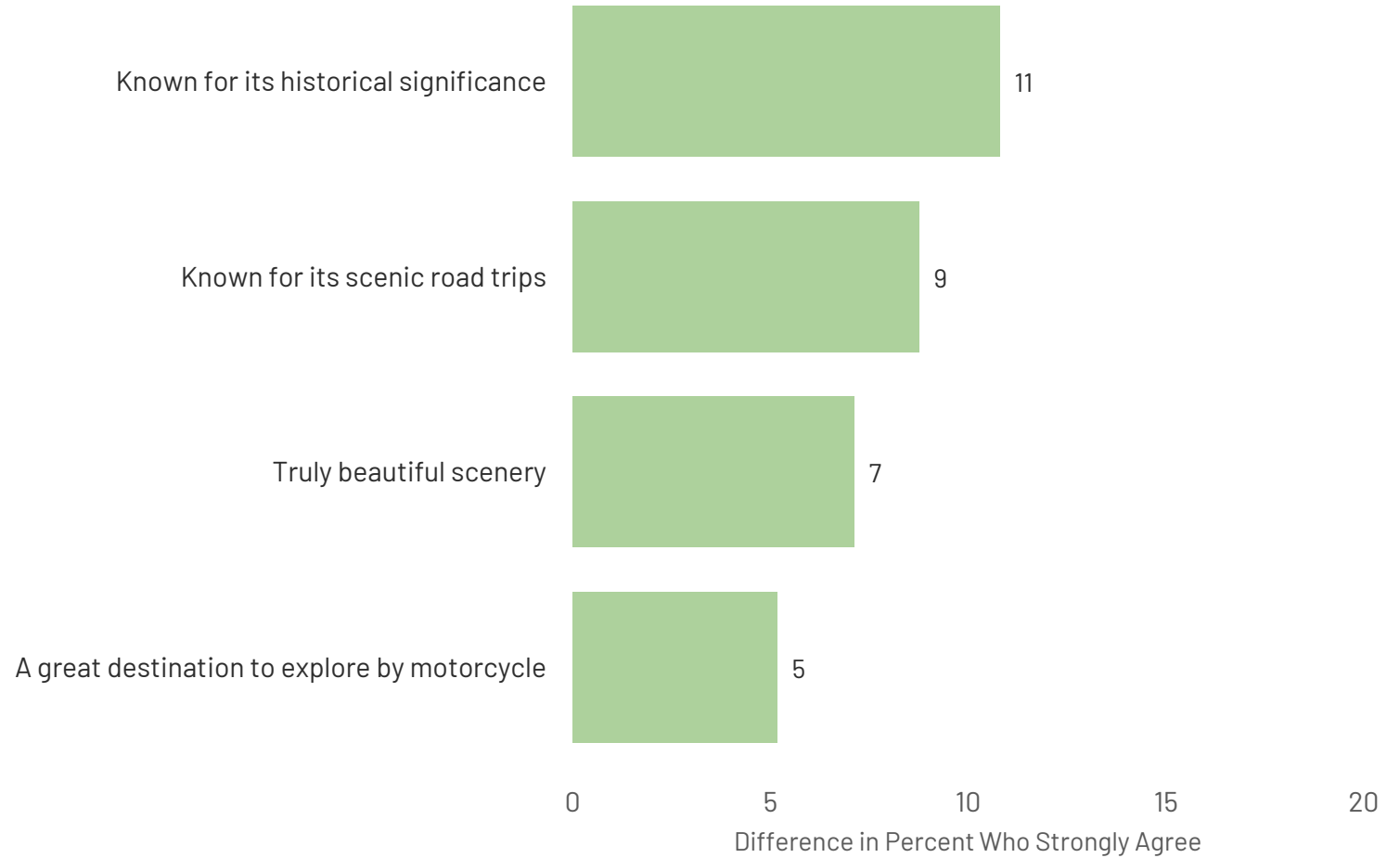
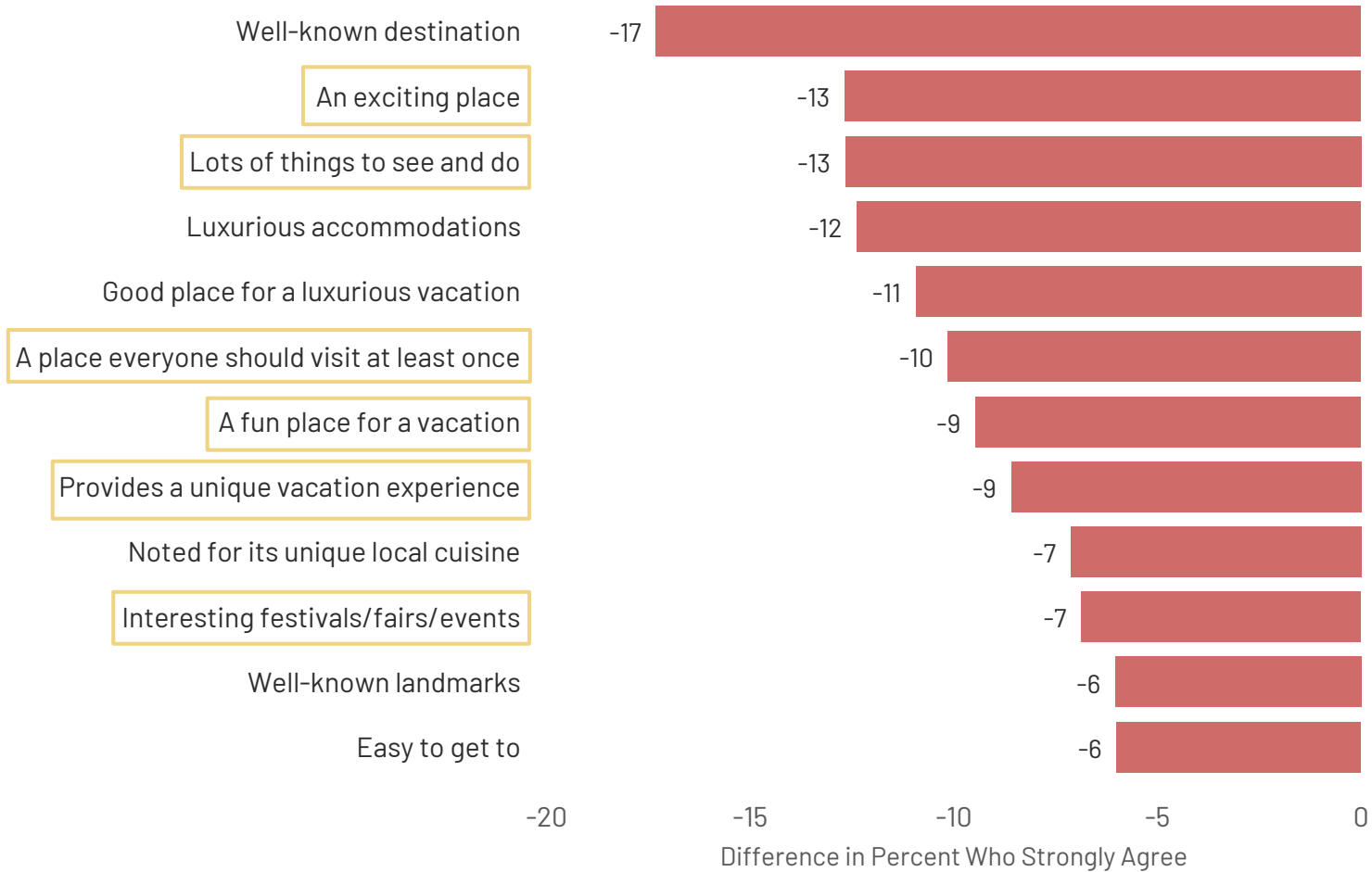


IMAGE WEAKNESSES VS. COMPETITION

Base: Canada



There are twelve image weaknesses that Virginia has versus its competitive set. The Hot Buttons within these weaknesses are:

- An exciting place
- Lots of things to see and do
- A place everyone should visit at least once
- A fun place for a vacation
- Provides a unique vacation experience
- Interesting festivals/fairs/events

Hot Button



So What Do We Do With This?

- Add some “Hot Buttons” in your imagery/messaging/storytelling...
- But DO NOT shy away from your image strengths... That is a positioning you own!
- Lead with what they know, and then surprise them!

Thank You!

Amir Eylon

President & CEO, Partner

aeylon@longwoods-intl.com

longwoods-intl.com



LongwoodsInternational



@Lngwds



aeylon

The logo for Longwoods International features the word "Longwoods" in a blue, sans-serif font with a small globe icon integrated into the letter "o". Below it, the word "INTERNATIONAL" is written in a smaller, green, all-caps, sans-serif font.





Bri Bélanger-Warner

***Canadian Media Relations & Marketing Specialist
Virginia Tourism Corporation***

A University of Ottawa Fine Arts graduate, Brigitte Bélanger-Warner has accumulated over 35 years of experience in the fields of media, public relations, and marketing. In 1989, Brigitte joined the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, where she worked in radio for 8 years. She also worked as television reporter and host for several programs at a local station in Ottawa. In 1997, Brigitte ran away with the circus, when she joined Cirque du Soleil as the Corporate Publicist at the International Headquarters in Montréal, then as Publicist for "O", Cirque du Soleil's water-based production in Las Vegas. After 10 successful years with the troupe, Bri left Las Vegas for the green hills of Virginia, where she worked in hospitality at a boutique hotel. After three years, she was recruited by the Charlottesville Albemarle Convention & Visitors Bureau, where she oversaw public relations, sales, and marketing. In 2018, she joined the Virginia Tourism Corporation to handle media relations and marketing in the Canadian market.

CANADIANS, OUR DEAR FRIENDS TO THE NORTH



Canada is Virginia's top international market: 400K visitors yearly!

- \$203 million spent in Virginia
- 81% from Ontario and Québec
- 81% drive to Virginia
- 73% are couples
- 71% stay in hotels/motels
- 3.2 average nights in Virginia

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS



Current travel trends for Canadians:

- Sustainable travel
- Food & wine tourism
- Indigenous experiences
- Adventure tourism
- Extended trips
- Solo travel
- Off-season travel
- Don't forget the snowbirds!

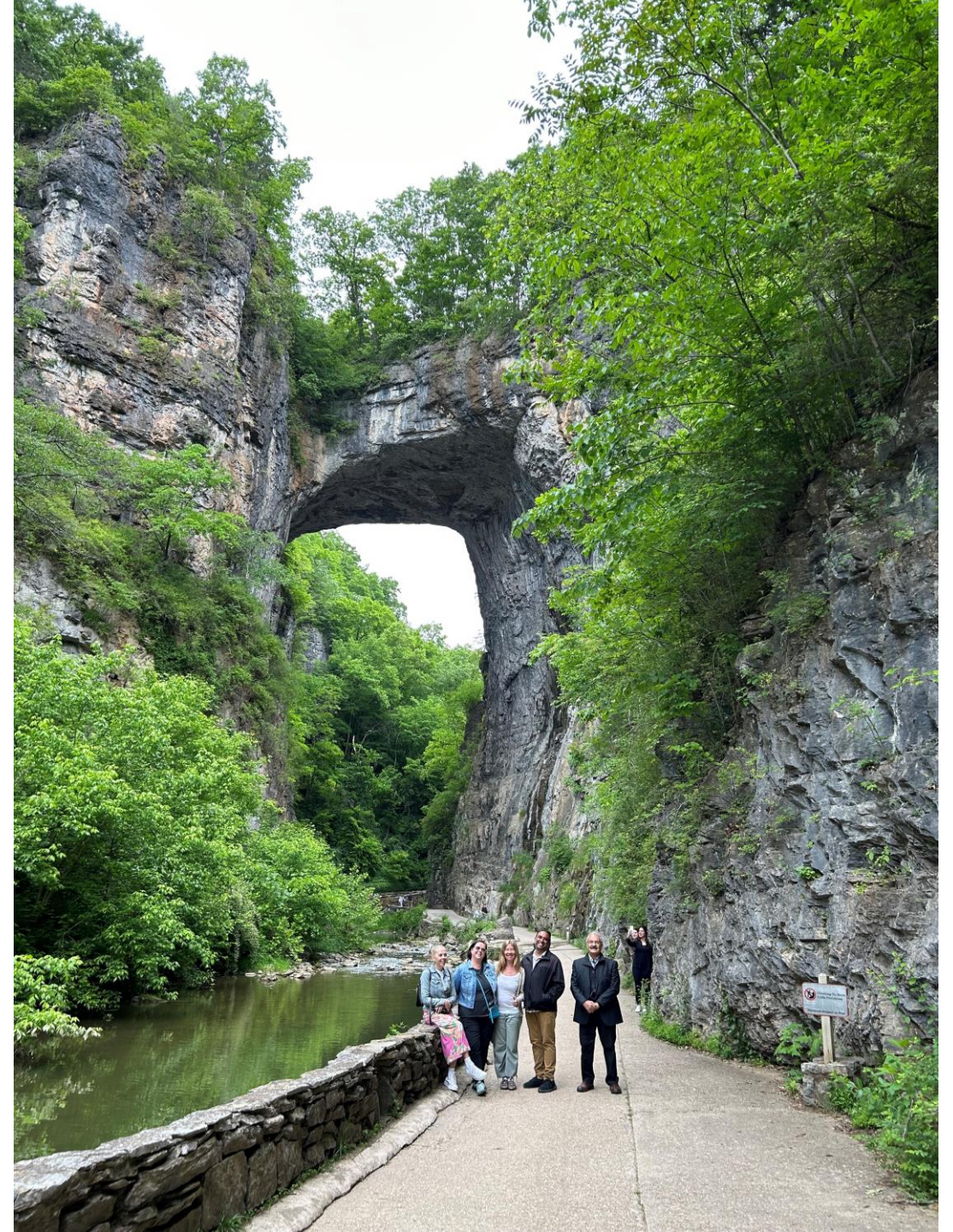
VIRGINIA IS FOR LO♥ERS



Our strategies to connect with Canadians

- Robust media relations
- Participation in select trade & consumer shows
- Advertising and promotions
- Media newsletters
- Sales & media missions

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS





ROBUST MEDIA RELATIONS

- Travel journalists
- Bloggers
- Radio personalities
- TV crews

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS



SELECT TRADE & CONSUMER SHOWS

- Travel Media Association of Canada (TMAC)
- Discover America Canada Day
- IMM North America
- IPW

- Golf shows (Toronto & Montréal)
- Outdoor Adventure shows (Toronto & Montréal)
- Travel shows (Montréal & Ottawa)
- Motorcycle Show (Toronto)
- Bicycle Show (Montréal)

Southwest VIRGINIA

Take the Road Less Travelled

BY LINDSAY DAVIES AND STAFF
PHOTOS: VIRGINIA TOURISM CORPORATION

What does slow, radio casual, I drove along a wagon of Southwest Virginia that could easily be overlooked if you put on your autopilot. Instead, I was imaginarily following my GPS on the main artery known as Interstate 64. My heart racing with each flick of my turn signal, I pondered the possibilities that were beyond each bend.

In this scenery-rich road trip where the trees are as tall as the Blue Ridge Mountains around me, it was easy to imagine myself as the storybook character Alice whose Wonderland became Southwest Virginia.

From Shenandoah to Roanoke in an area known as the Appalachian plateau, the region is a magical union of wilderness. Blessed with honeycomb caves, rushing rivers, and terrain that changes from some of the oldest mountains on earth to forested floors, I discovered that Southwest Virginia is an outdoor adventurer's dream for all ages at all skill levels. An under-the-radar destination open for exploration anytime of the year, don't be surprised by the chills-and-rut effects as you tear off the big highway, slow down on scenic drives and hit the beats by eye-candy vistas.

I HAVEN'T MET A VIEW I DIDN'T LIKE IN SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

They say the best views are off the beaten path, so I rode less travelled roads whenever possible. One exception was the highly popular Blue Ridge Parkway. Revered as "America's favorite scenic drive," my drive easily became a crawl as I stopped at every overlook, present in the moment, watching the cumulus clouds drift atop the Blue Ridge Mountains. It was as if Mother Nature herself painted the natural setting.



PHOTOS: SCOTTIE BROWN / ADRIAN L. WARDEN / PHOTOFEST

DID YOU KNOW?

By renting a Polar's Slingshot at the tourism centre in Thomas, you can take the Back of the Dragon to the next level. Tackle the curvy roads inches from the ground in an open cockpit!

ADVERTISING & PROMOTIONS

Balanced approach between more traditional media (print & radio) and online options. « Advertorials » preferred when possible.

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[Click here to view this email in your web browser.](#)

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS[®]

OCTOBER NEWS FROM VIRGINIA TOURISM



Virginia Creeper Trail. Photo by Sam Dean

As the crisp air of fall approaches, Virginia's beaches remain warm and inviting, making it the perfect time to explore everything this vibrant state has to offer! From golden-hued festivals and breezy shorelines to tranquil lakes and rivers, Virginia delivers a rich variety of autumn experiences. Sip your way through scenic winery tours, wander through charming, colorful neighborhoods, and savor the refreshing cool of mountain getaways. Whether you're seeking adventure, relaxation, or a bit of both, Virginia has everything you need for an [unforgettable fall escape](#).

MEDIA NEWSLETTERS

Sharing what's new
with over 400 contacts
in the Canadian market!

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS[®]



MEDIA & SALES MISSIONS

- Open to up to 5 local DMO partners
- Focusing on one market at a time
- Next mission: Montréal in May 2025
- VTC also participates in Canada Connect, mission organized by Brand USA

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

THE MORE WE KNOW, THE BEST WE CAN SUPPORT YOUR EFFORTS

- Send us media releases & newsletters
- Contact us about interest in joining us at shows
- Keep us informed of your efforts in the Canadian market



VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS



Sheema Vohra

***Managing Director
Sartha Global Marketing LLP***

Sheema Vohra is the co-founder and Managing Director for Sartha Global Marketing and Director for Mileage Communications (India) Pvt. Ltd.

As a successfully established industry veteran with over two and a half decades of experience, Sheema's work expertise spans across domains including – Tourism, Hospitality and Public Relations.

Her wealth of knowledge ranges from – developing comprehensive strategies for tourism development of destinations, leading effective hotel sales and marketing initiatives, and maintaining relationships with significant industry stakeholders.

Prior to Sartha Global Marketing, Sheema worked for the Oberoi Group of Hotels and Marriott International. Her current professional affiliations and memberships include – IAC Chair for IPW since 2001; Industry Co-Chair for U.S. India Travel & Tourism Working Group for AMCHAM India, Member of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), and Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI).

She lived, studied and worked in the USA for over 8 years, and is a graduate from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (Hotel School)

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IS FOR
LOVERS®**

**INDIA
MARKET UPDATE**

A photograph of the North Carolina State Capitol building, featuring a prominent golden dome and a portico with columns. The building is set against a backdrop of lush green trees and a blue sky with wispy clouds. A white heart icon is overlaid on the image, positioned below the text.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

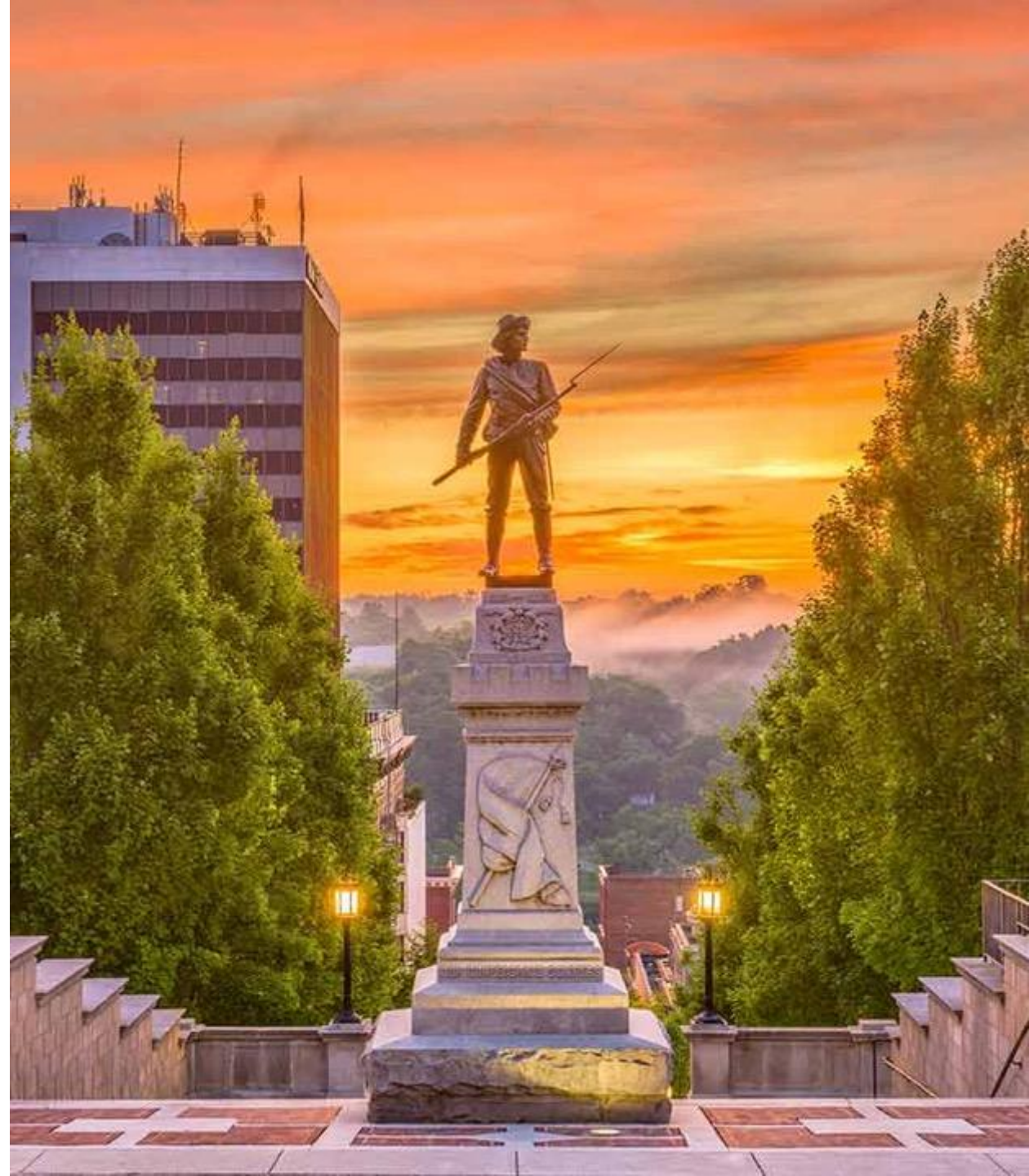
ECONOMY & TRAVEL TRENDS

Fastest Growing Major Economy Globally

- GDP growth: **6.5-7%**
- **Rising affluence** across Tier 1, 2 and 3 cities
- Key consumer groups: **Millennials, Boomers, Gen Z**
- **Demographic Advantage** – 60 % of India's population comprises millennials and Gen Z

Changing Travel Preferences

- Shift towards **authentic local experiences** and cultural immersion.
- Growing Demand for **wellness, nature, and culinary tourism**
- Sharp Rise in **sports, events, and experiential travel**
- Increased demand for **luxury travel**





AVIATION BOOM

Growing Airlift:

- **Fastest growing** aviation market in the world
- **Over 1000 new aircraft** on order by Indian airlines
- Direct flights to **Dulles by Air India**

Multiple one-stop options:

- **European Carriers:** Indigo x Turkish Airlines, Lufthansa X United Airlines, KLM x Delta, Virgin Atlantic x Delta, Air France x Delta, British Airways x American Airlines.
- **Middle East Carriers:** Etihad, Emirates, Qatar.

THE INDIAN CONSUMER

- **Affluent & Luxury:** Growing wealth fuels premium travel; luxury market projected to reach **\$200B by 2030**.
- **Mobile-First & Digitally Savvy:** Highest social media user base globally, with **750M+ internet users**
- **Expanding Outbound Market:** **28M outbound travelers in 2023** to reach **50 million by 2030**.
- **Value-Oriented & Sophisticated:** Discerning, educated, and quality-focused; willing to invest in premium experiences.





CULTURAL CONSIDERATION

- **Food Preferences:** vegetarian options with limited interest in beef or pork.
 - International and local cuisine preferred plus an occasional Indian meal.
- **Family Activities:** Preference for unique experiences; older travelers prefer less outdoor activities.
- **Language:** Majority is comfortable with English.
- **Service Expectations:** Used to high standards of services, including rooms with tea and coffee.
- **Hotels:** Central and Downtown locations preferred (walkability)
- **Health, Safety & Connectivity:** Prioritize safety and require reliable internet access.

EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIES TO ENGAGE WITH INDIAN VISITORS



- **Consumer Inspiration:** Develop unique, relevant content and programs.
- **Travel Trade Engagement:** Focus on education, inspiration and collaboration.
- **Support Fam Trips:** Facilitate media, travel trade, and influencer trips.
- **Omni-Channel Strategy:** Implement a cohesive approach across all channels.
- **Tech-Driven Experiences:** Leverage digital platforms for seamless consumer engagement

THANK YOU!





Marjorie Dewey

President

Connect Worldwide Japan Co., Ltd.

Marjorie Dewey is president of Connect Worldwide Japan Co., Ltd. Over the course of her nearly 40-year career in Japan, Marjorie has represented 20 U.S. states and 6 cities. A recognized leader in the Japanese travel and tourism industry, Marjorie has served as chairman of ANTOR (Association of National Tourism Office Representatives) and the Japan Visit USA Committee, served as a director of numerous professional and trade organizations, and advisor to the Japan Association of Travel Agents. Marjorie is bilingual in English and Japanese and is a graduate of Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

JAPAN UPDATE



A silhouette of a person wearing a cap and a backpack, sitting on a large rock. They are holding a camera on a tripod, which is also resting on the rock. The background is a sunset sky with a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a warm orange and yellow glow. The sky transitions to a soft purple and blue at the top. A white heart icon is positioned below the word 'Opportunities'.

Opportunities



AFFLUENT TRAVELERS

- Gen X and Baby Boomers with money to travel and strong desire to pursue their passions
- Key opportunities in Virginia
 - ✓ Wine
 - ✓ Culinary
 - ✓ Spa/Wellness
 - ✓ Luxury resorts

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SISTER CITY ENGAGEMENT

- U.S.-Japan Tourism Year Government-to-Government Bilateral Agreement signed November 29, 2023 to encourage travel between Japan and U.S. and return Japan to #2 overseas inbound market.
- Runs from January 2024-March 2025
- Brand USA, DMOs, tour operators encouraged to develop campaigns and promotions in 2024/25 to reach goal.
- Japan and U.S. governments encouraging sister city exchanges
 - ✓ Newport News-Neyagawa
 - ✓ Norfolk-Kitakyushu
 - ✓ Richmond-Saitama
 - ✓ Virginia Beach-Miyazaki

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS



U.S. - JAPAN
TOURISM YEAR 2024

日米観光交流年 2024



VA 250 TRAVEL

Opportunities for

- ✓ Escorted senior groups
- ✓ Student groups
- ✓ Corporate/MICE/Incentive groups

VIRGINIA IS FOR LO♥ERS



A silhouette of a person wearing a cap and a backpack, standing on a rocky peak. They are holding a camera mounted on a tripod. The background is a sunset sky with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm glow. The overall scene is dark, with the person and rocks appearing as black shapes against the colorful sky.

Cultural Considerations & Preferences



KEY MOTIVATORS

REFRESH! EAT! DISCOVER!

The JTB Tourism Research 2024 travel trend outlook reported the top 3 motivators for Japanese wanting to travel overseas (Source JTB Corp; 2024 Travel Outlook).

01

refreshing the mind



02

eating delicious local foods



03

seeking new discoveries



KEY BARRIER

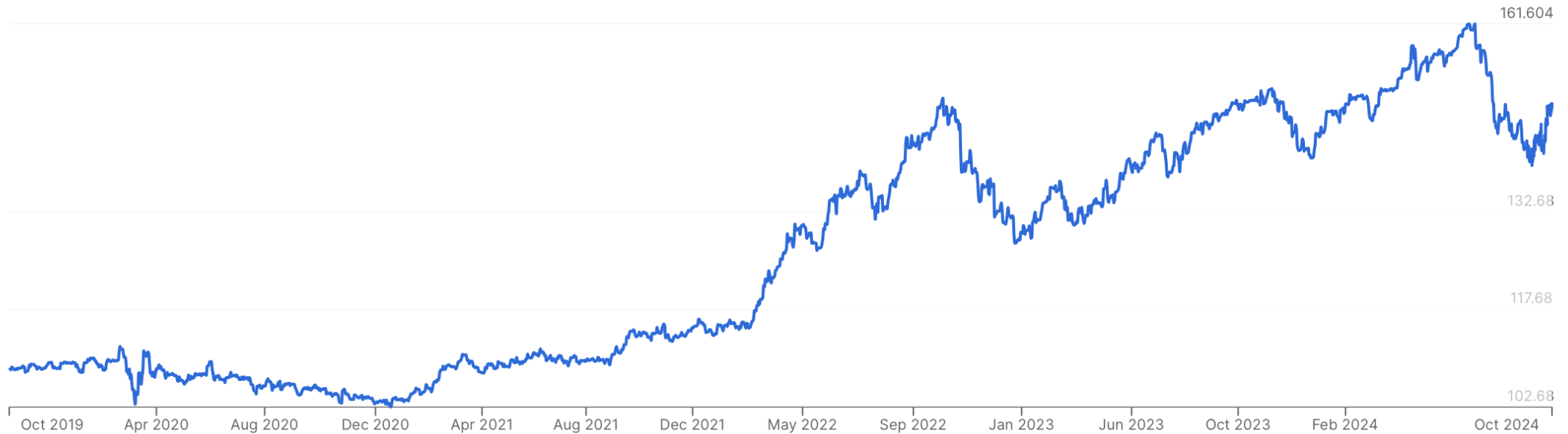
THE WEAK JAPANESE YEN

USD to JPY Chart **+37.60%** (5Y)

● 1 USD = 149.135 JPY Oct 10, 2024 at 02:37 UTC

US Dollar to Japanese Yen

12H 1D 1W 1M 1Y 2Y 5Y 10Y



Effective Japan Strategies





START LOCAL

- Outreach to Japanese and Japanese companies in Virginia, Sister Cities
- Outreach to Japanese receptives in New York and California—JTB USA, H.I.S. USA, Amnet, Travel America Factory, Tour America
- Create Japanese-language collateral
- Leverage major special events that will attract Japanese

VIRGINIA IS FOR LO♥ERS™

THANK YOU!





Penny Brand

*Head of Tourism Development
Gate 7*

Penny Brand is the Head of Tourism Development at Gate 7. Her journey in the sector began in 1998 as a European Tour guide with Contiki, and over the past 25 years, Penny has become an industry stalwart with a wealth of experience across various segments. With a track record that speaks volumes and an infectious passion that knows no bounds, Penny continues to shape the tourism landscape, retaining her reputation as the foremost industry expert and go-to source for all things travel at Gate 7.

Penny's diverse background includes roles in guiding, hotel sales and marketing, and even throwing people out of airplanes. Returning to Gate 7 in 2015 after an 11-year exploration of other industry segments, Penny's strengths are numerous and varied, ranging from product development and distribution to training and engagement within the travel trade. Her skill set extends to executing integrated conversion lead campaigns, showcasing her strategic calibre in driving tourism initiatives.

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LOVERS®**

VA-1

The Australian Traveler

The Australian Market



- Population: 27 Million
- GDP Annual Growth rate: 2.1%
- Interest Rate: 4.35%
- Inflation Rate: 2.7%
- Unemployment Rate: 4.2%
- AUD/USD: ~69c

**Australia is an affluent country:
>1.15M households have an annual income of \$200K +**

Australians continue to make travel the biggest priority in their discretionary spending.

Travel Demand = **Top Priority**

75%

9.2m

Value

Cultural
Exploration

TOP 3: Traveler Trend Stats

42%

**WANT TO TAKE A
SPORTCURSION**

71%

**WILL TRAVEL OVER
BUYING A HOUSE**

76%

**PLAN TO TAKE A
HOLIDAY IN NEXT 12M**

Motivations & Trends

CULTURAL
EXPLORATION



VALUE: LUXE
FOR LESS



GIVE ME
A REASON



JET JETTING



DISCONNECT
& WELLNESS



FAMILIAR PLACES
UNFAMILIAR WAYS



2024 Motivators

- Cultural exploration, luxe for less, social connection, and milestones
- Year of the solo and “bleisure” traveler.

Insights: Demographics



**YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS**



**PROSPEROUS
FAMILIES**



**COMFORTABLE
CRUISERS**



SKI-ERS

Path to Purchase = **Insights**



Extended planning



Omnipresent approach



Loyalty

CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS



Thong
Flip Flop



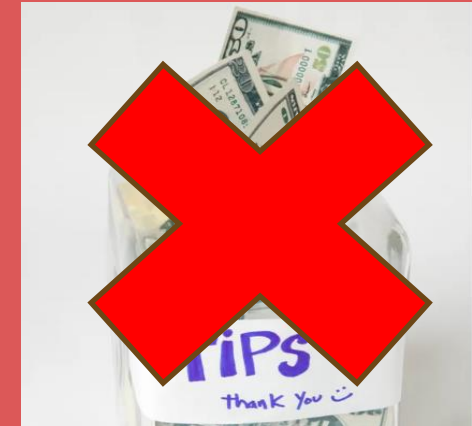
Boot
Trunk



Jumper
Sweater



Fairy Floss
Cotton Candy



Tipping

DISTRIBUTION STRATEGIES

- Receptives (Wholesale)
- Tourism Exchange USA
- OTA's

Accommodation + Attractions
= Package

Public Relations

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THANK YOU!



Penny Brand
Head of
Tourism Development

Penny@gate7.com.au



Christi Braginton

*Associate Director, Global Media Relations & Marketing
Virginia Tourism Corporation*

Christi Braginton is the Associate Director of Global Media Relations and Marketing at Virginia Tourism Corporation. She has worked in the marketing and communications field for more than 30 years. For the last 10 years Christi has handled public relations and communication strategies for VTC in Virginia's target overseas markets including the UK, Germany, France, India, Japan, and Australia. Christi manages and coordinates the efforts of in-country representatives, utilizing hosted media tours, missions, proactive pitching of story ideas, press releases and social media efforts to secure coverage in travel publications throughout the world, drawing attention to Virginia's many tourism assets and inspiring international guests to visit Virginia, stay longer and spend more money in the Commonwealth.

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VTC

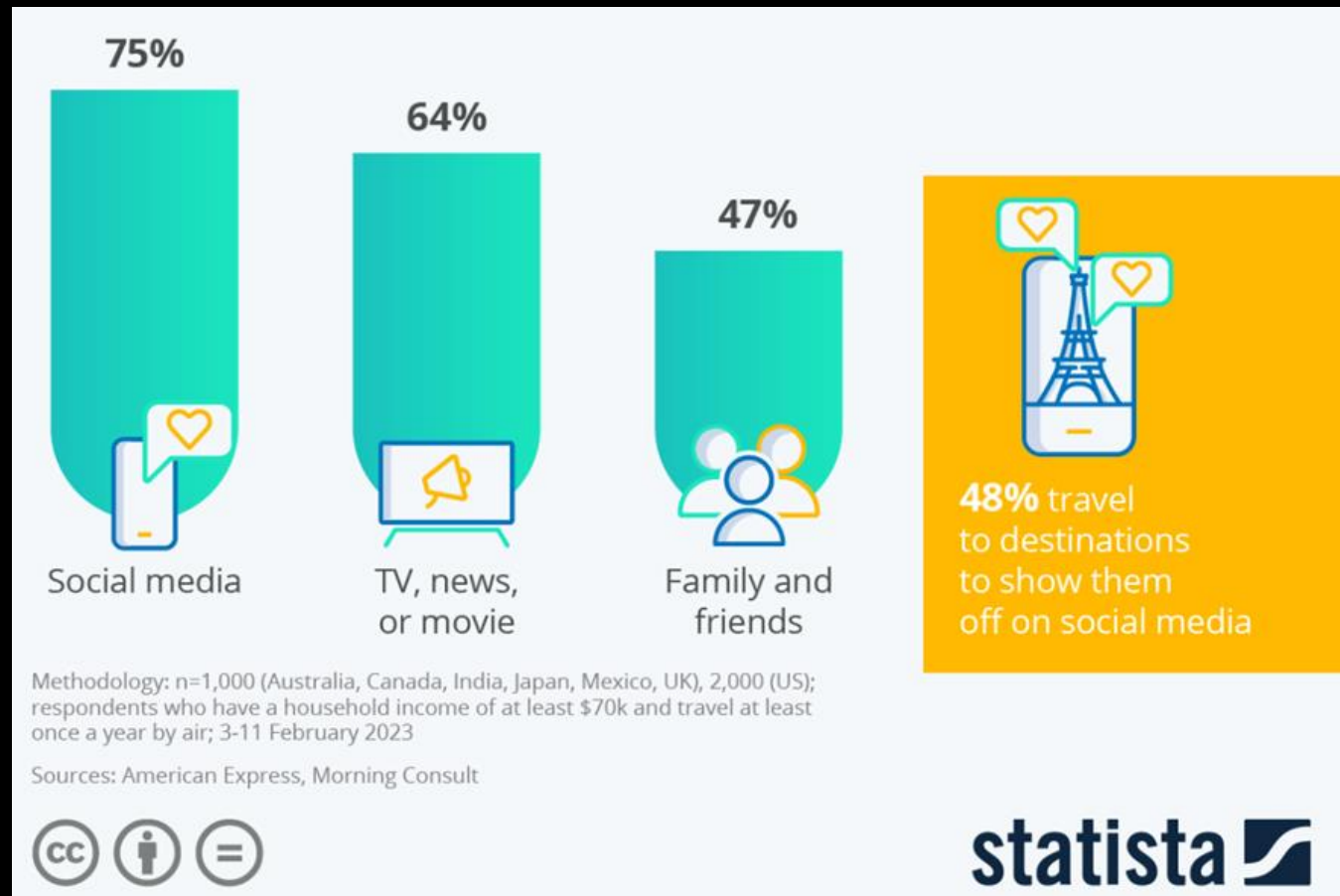
**Utilizing PR
Opportunities**

Utilizing PR Opportunities



What Drives Travel Choices?

A recent Statista study shows:



Media Coverage

Stories About YOUR Offerings:

- Drive awareness
- Inspire travel

TO YOUR DESTINATION

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**The Times
of London**

**Quest
France**

Escape

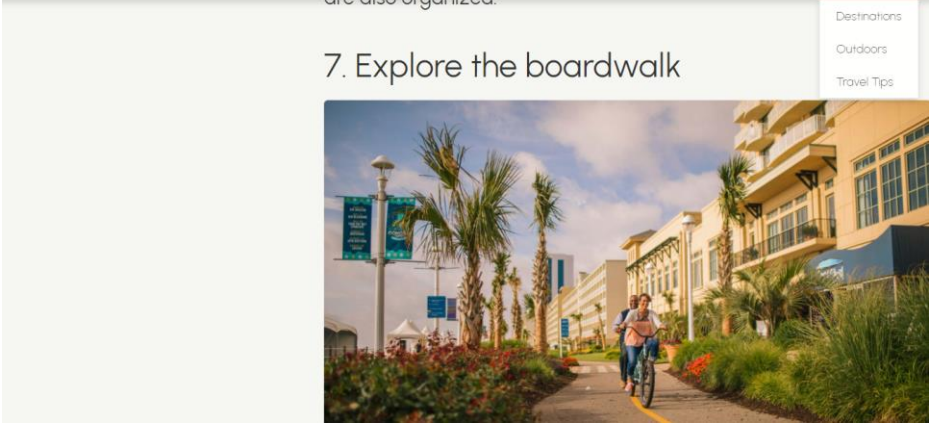
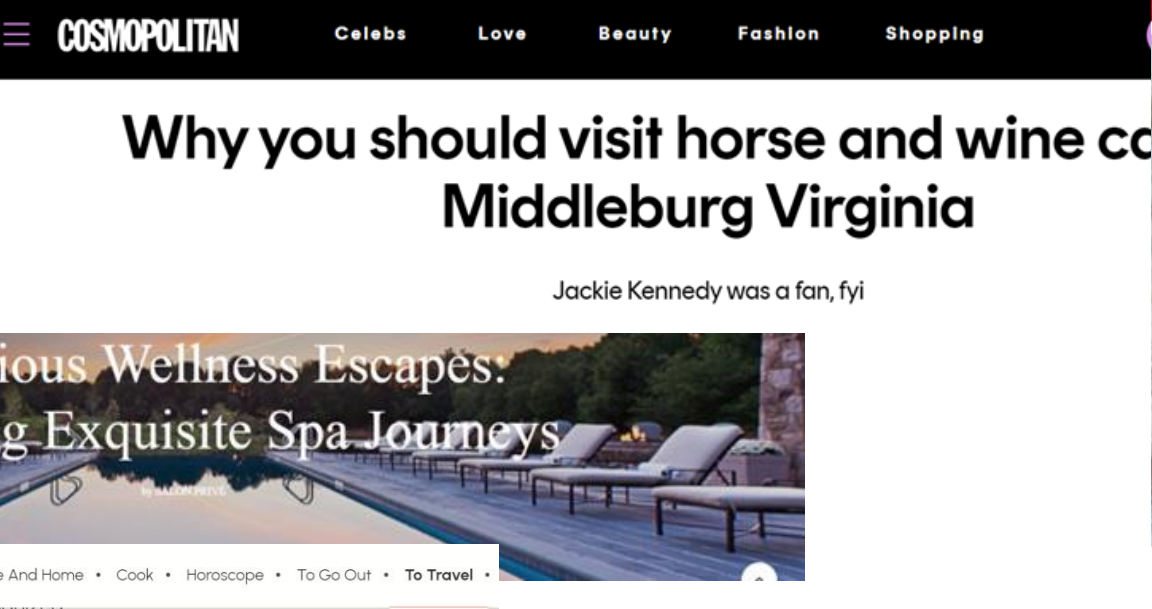
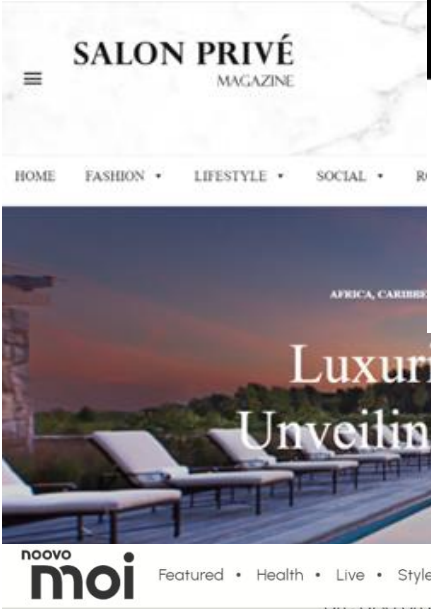
**Journal de
Montréal**

**Toronto
Sun**

RadioReise

Securing International Coverage is Possible

Let the Virginia Tourism International Team Help



Utilizing PR Opportunities



#1 – Send Your Information and Assets

- Press Releases
- New Information
- High-resolution Imagery
- Video (IF AVAILABLE)

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS

2 – Host a Media Fam

- Numerous media – individuals and groups – visit Virginia each year
- Assistance with itineraries and access to tourism offerings
- In-kind support



#3 – Meet with Key Media

**ATTEND A
MISSION**

**Attend an
International
Showcase**

**Take Advantage of Opportunities to Meet International
Media Face-to-Face**

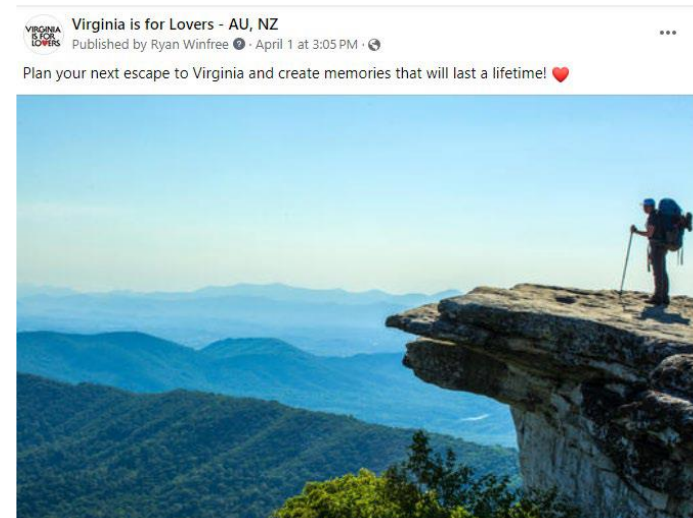
#4 - Social Media

In-country Posts and Campaigns:

- **Drive awareness**
- **Inspire travel**

TO YOUR DESTINATION

VIRGINIA IS FOR LOVERS



Virginia is for Lovers - AU, NZ
The official Facebook page for Virginia Tourism

See insights and ads

147

Like

Most relevant

Comment as Virginia is for Lovers - AU, NZ

Mike Taylor
Very beautiful isn't it Virginia and West Virginia
get out and enjoy

Ad preview



Tourisme Virginie

January 3 at 4:45 PM · Published by Brigitte Belanger-Warner

Il n'est jamais trop tôt pour planifier un voyage à la plage! ❤️

Virginia Beach Boardwalk, Virginia Beach
Visit Virginia Beach



VIRGINIA.ORG

Canada - Virginia Is For Lovers

Découvrez le lieu de vacances idéal: visitez la Virginie!

Learn more

For More Information Visit

**VATC.ORG / Marketing /
International**

OR

**Contact the International
Team**

THANK YOU!



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Elias Manneh

*Chief Partnership Officer
Ink Global*

Elias, Ink's Chief Marketing & Partnership Officer, specializes in tourism board, airline, and airport cooperative campaigns, overseeing operations across Ink's global offices. His primary objective is to craft unparalleled marketing strategies, foster partnerships, and cultivate exceptional relationships for destinations and brands seeking to engage with the travel audience. Before joining Ink, Elias dedicated 22 years to United Airlines, serving in various senior roles across the United States, Middle East, and Asia.

VIRGINIA
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LOVERS®



UNITED
AIRLINES





COME FIND *Your* VIRGINIA

Come find

A phrase to inspire. One that encourages exploration and suggests new things. The pioneer spirit

Your

This campaign is about the individual! It's about unique and memorable experiences that matter to YOU.

Virginia

There is so many amazing experiences available in this state, so many sides. This line challenges you to look deeper.



THE POWER OF **PARTNERSHIPS**

Collaboration with airlines, travel agencies, and tourism boards allow us to combine resources and expertise, creating powerful campaigns that connect with travelers worldwide. Together, we amplify our message and tap into new markets, building trust and authenticity.

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

Partnering with airlines like United Airlines gives us access to extensive marketing channels, customer networks, and unique advertising opportunities. This partnership enhances visibility and makes it easier for travelers to choose Virginia as their destination.



BOOSTING TOURISM WITH UNITED

Our 'Come Find Your Virginia' campaign with United Airlines leverages in-flight media and targeted advertising to reach millions of international travelers. The partnership has helped showcase Virginia's attractions, increasing engagement and driving bookings.



CAMPAIGN HIGHLIGHTS



THANK YOU!





Patrick Rodgers

*Director of Product
Tourism Exchange USA*

As the Director of Product for Tourism Exchange USA, Patrick is responsible for balancing the requirements of technical systems with the needs of stakeholders and partners to deliver an impactful platform for communities and businesses. His professional experience includes time in journalism, destination marketing, strategic consulting, B2B SaaS startups, and restaurant kitchens. He has developed award-winning programs and websites for a wide range of destinations, including San Francisco Travel, Discover Puerto Rico, Hawaii Tourism Authority, and Explore Branson, among others. He's appeared at a variety of conferences during the last 15 years, and is a former instructor at the Southeast Tourism Society's annual Marketing College. He currently lives in New York's Hudson Valley with his wife and their cat.

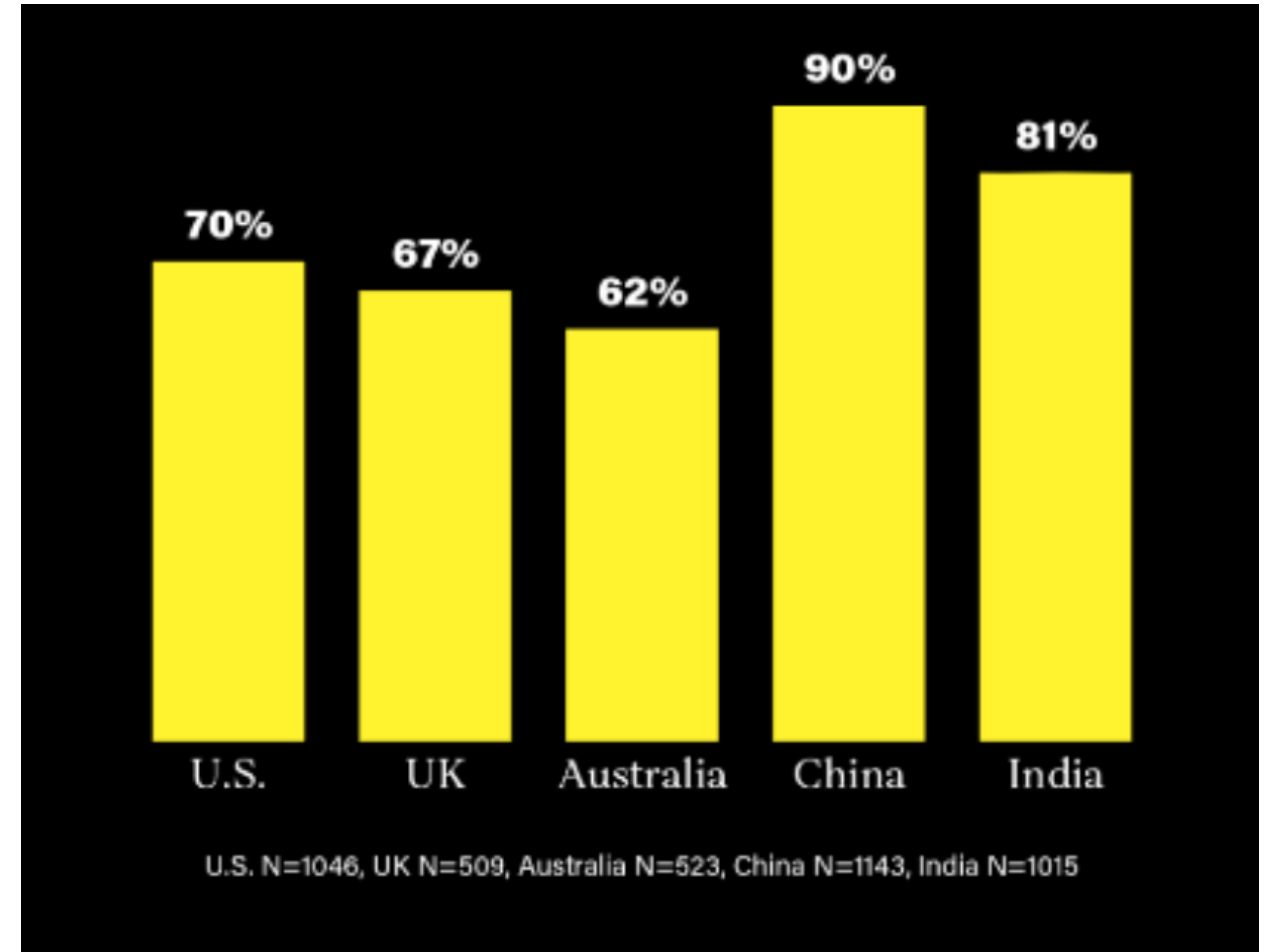
A silhouette of a person wearing a cap and a backpack, sitting on a large rock. They are holding a camera on a tripod. The background is a sunset sky with a bright sun low on the horizon, creating a warm orange and yellow glow. The sky transitions to a soft purple and blue at the top. A white heart icon is positioned in the center of the image, overlapping the person's legs and the tripod.

TOURISM EXCHANGE USA

An Appetite for **ADVENTURE & AUTHENTICITY**

In Skift's Millennial and Gen Z survey, the overwhelming majority of global travelers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, **“I look for travel experiences my friends and family may not have thought of.”**

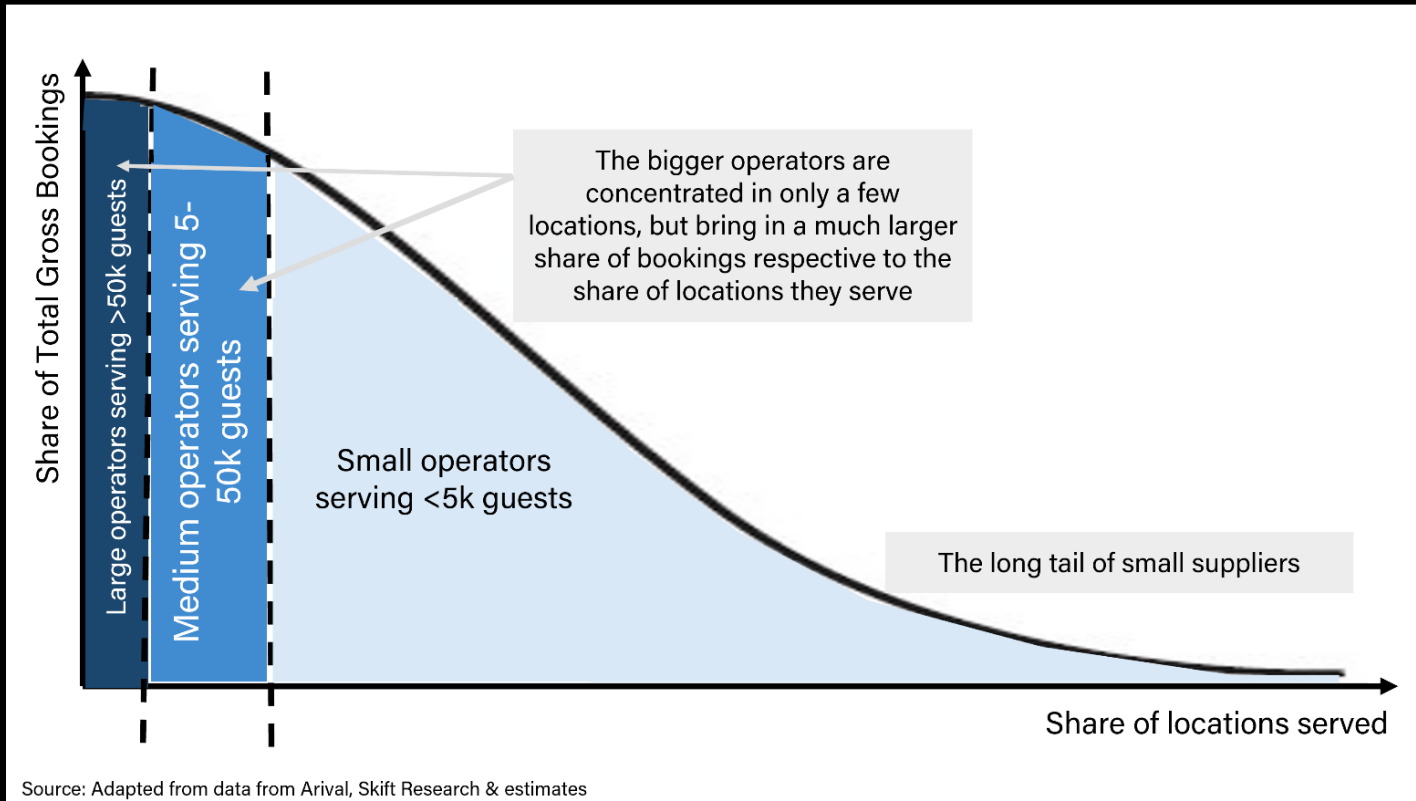
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THE CHALLENGE & THE OPPORTUNITY

“There is still much work to be done in order for travel brands to fully deliver on the emotionally meaningful experiences craved by consumers – a desire that often clashes with the commercial objectives of major travel companies.”

Skift – The Last Outpost of Travel 2023



Only about **50%** of tours and activities worldwide are currently available online.

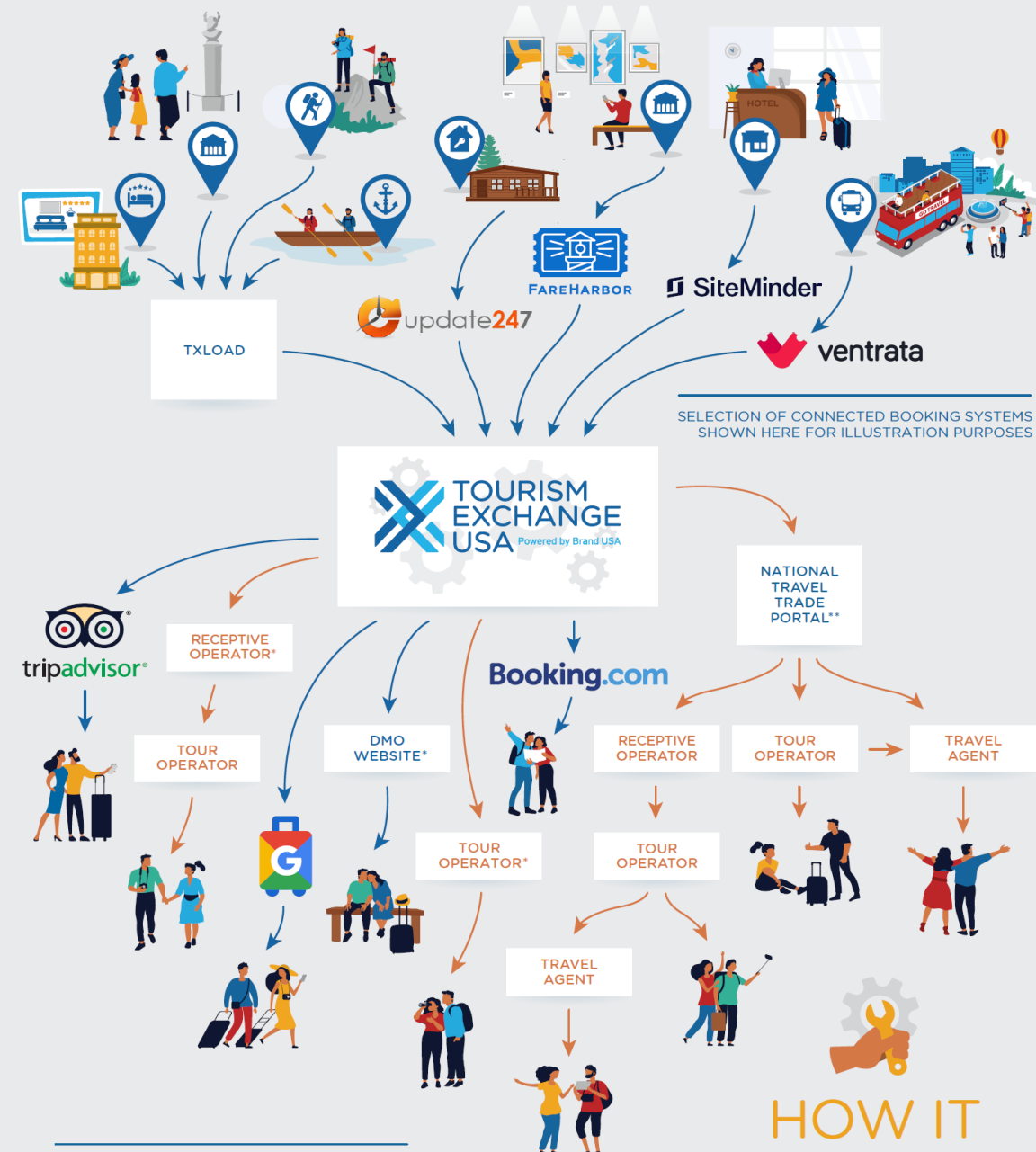
Tourism Exchange USA **BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN CONSUMER INTERESTS & PRODUCT AVAILABILITY**

The Exchange is an additive solution that helps small and mid-size businesses get online and/or expand their reach to global markets in a scalable, efficient way.



WHAT IS TOURISM EXCHANGE USA?

- Attractions, activities and accommodations connect their live rates and availability
- Businesses select the right distribution partners for their business, including tour operators and travel agents
- Distributors accept the business and begin selling it to their customers
- Destinations now have new product to showcase at trade shows and missions



* INDIVIDUAL NEGOTIATED COMMISSION RATES
** PRESET STANDARDIZED COMMISSION RATES

Businesses gain access to the worlds most popular OTAs & Traditional Travel Trade

Accommodations



Booking.com



agoda
● ● ● ● ●



airbnb



tripadvisor

Trip.com



Tours/Activities



viator



Google Things to do

Destination Websites

State
Local/Regional
DMO & Association
Websites

*This option is only available
when a DMO or
Association has elected to
become a distributor.*

Coming Soon

places
travel

GET
YOUR
GUIDE

Travel professionals gain access to **NEW PRODUCTS**

The National Travel Trade Portal offers an easy, low-tech way for tour operators to buy local tourism products, expanding itineraries into lesser-known markets and drive economic impact.

The screenshot displays the National Travel Trade Portal interface. At the top, the logo for TOURISM EXCHANGE USA is visible alongside the text 'National Travel Trade Portal'. A navigation bar includes links for 'Start a Booking', 'Bookings', 'Baskets', 'Reports', and 'Users', along with a user profile for 'Patrick's Fantastic Voyages'. The main content area features a 'Start a Booking' section with search filters: 'Accommodations' and 'Activities' (selected), 'Any Location' (dropdown), 'Search by date' (calendar icon), and 'Search by keyword' (input field). Below the filters, the 'Activities' section is displayed, showing three product cards. Each card includes an 'Instant Confirmation' badge, a photo, the location, the activity name, and the starting price. The first card is for 'Louisville Food Tours' in Louisville, Kentucky, priced from \$35.00. The second is for 'Muscle Shoals Sound Studios Tour' in Sheffield, Alabama, priced from \$20.00. The third is for 'Nashville Adventures' in Nashville, Tennessee, priced from \$28.99. A 'Your basket (0 items)' button is located in the top right of the activity section. At the bottom right, there is a language selection button for 'English'.

TOURISM EXCHANGE USA National Travel Trade Portal

Start a Booking Bookings Baskets Reports Users Patrick's Fantastic Voyages

Start a Booking

Accommodations **Activities** Any Location Search by date Search by keyword Search

Activities Your basket (0 items)

Instant Confirmation
Louisville, Kentucky
Louisville Food Tours
From \$35.00
Walking food & history tours of Louisville, Kentucky

Instant Confirmation
Sheffield, Alabama
Muscle Shoals Sound Studios Tour
From \$20.00

Instant Confirmation
Nashville, Tennessee
Nashville Adventures
From \$28.99

English

What Does SUCCESS LOOK LIKE



Muscle Shoals Sound Studio - Inside the Magic

Sheffield, Alabama

Muscle Shoals Sound Studios Tour

From \$20.00 per ticket

Check price & availability

MM/DD/YYYY



Check Now

Tourism

How Brand USA Is Leveling the Playing Field for Travel and Tourism

Brand USA + Skift
December 21st, 2023 at 10:00 AM EST

Partner Content



Skift Take

Next Story →

With the majority of global travel bookings occurring online, Brand USA and Tourism Exchange USA have joined forces to help introduce international travelers to historically underrepresented destinations, accommodations, activities, and experiences in the United States.

— Brand USA



Get Weekly
Tourism News

QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!



For more industry information on the VTC International Team visit
<https://vatc.org/marketing/international/> or scan the QR Code