

A touch of Downton Abbey in Washington, DC

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It's not always easy to order a mansion when you want one. But a new, shall we say, vacation mansions concept aims to offer a dab of Downton Abbey with a lot of space and spice to luxury travelers in the desired locations of Washington D.C., New York and Los Angeles.

These may be celebrities, heads of state, diplomats, wealthy families or even wedding parties with friends and relatives who want to share the moment in style. It can be C-suite associates in for a weekend or a week of training and bonding. It can even be a reunion that will be remembered for generations to come.

These are the thoughts behind LXIV, a Washington D.C.-based start-up whose flagship and launch product is a posh "away estate" in Georgetown (and soon to come to Los Angeles, New York City and beyond) that will give travelers a peek at a lifestyle known mostly to captains of industry and heads of state.

The company purchased the circa-1840 estate in 2022 and spent the next two years making it into a stunner. The manse once stood as two separate homes that merged in 1929 when acquired by Ruth Hanna McCormick Simms, the daughter of Mark Hanna, a prominent figure in the Ohio Republican Party. In 1928, she became one of the first women to be elected to Congress and made history again by securing a party nomination for the Senate, although sheulti-



LARK GOULD TNS

LXIV DC Gardens.

mately did not win the seat. Later, she ran Thomas Dewey's presidential campaign and married Medill McCormack, heir to the publishing company and McCormack's industrial fortunes. Finally, she married Republican congressman Albert Gallatin Simms of New Mexico.

Over the decades, the estate became an "in" spot for numerous social events attended by Washington's elite. Its gardens were designed by Rose Greeley, the first licensed female architect in D.C., further enhancing its cultural significance. Over the years, the house has served as an entertainment go-to as well as a backdrop for clandestine negotiations and treaties, and a home to a litany of literati and glitterati, including John Balfour, Scottie Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, and Boyden Gray, among others.

Just up from M Street along the notorious cobbled streets and bricked sidewalks of Old Georgetown, the manse welcomes up to 12 guests per night with six bedrooms -- three king suites and three queen deluxe suites

-- along with 14 bathrooms and an assortment of gathering spaces that include an outdoor pool, solarium, fully-equipped fitness and sauna area and several flowering gardens. A nightly rate starting at \$15,000 (with booking commissions of 10 percent) brings plenty of inclusions, although ringing the basement bells for awaiting handmaids and valets may not be one of them.

"We saw a gap in the market for a truly private and personalized experience," explains Ezra Glass, co-founder of LXIV Group, who previously owned a high net-worth concierge company that catered to dignitaries visiting the D.C. area. "During our travels in Europe, we would stay in these nice villas and estates in the south of France and realized these should exist in the US. We wanted to combine that feeling of being in a grand estate with all the privacy, security, space and everything else you get in those home-style comforts with the services of really nice five-star hotels. It's very infrequent that you get

both."

Moving through the manse, guests enter a grand foyer with its walnut-carved entryway and are immediately struck by the sense of light and scope. The first floor brings a series of interconnected rooms, each with its own distinct character. The living room, sporting the original parquet flooring and anchored by a custom-made fireplace, is inviting for relaxation and conversation. Upstairs, the bedrooms each have their own designs and themes and unusual layouts. The master suite, with its king-size bed, spa-like bathroom, and private balcony overlooking the gardens, is a haven of tranquility.

The property's restoration was entrusted to co-owner Jessica Glass, a renowned interior architect, and interior designer Eric Chang, who sought to preserve the home's historic charm while adapting it for contemporary living. To that end, the outside remains protected as an emblem of this historic part of the city, but the interiors seem more out of New York's MOMA or a page from Architectural Digest. The walls are adorned with ten tons of hand-applied Matteo Brioni plaster, creating a rich velvety texture that enhances the home's historic features. Darker tones are used in intimate spaces, while brighter colors energize communal areas. Each margin is designed to harmonize with the gardens, incorporating natural motifs and materials inspired by the outdoor environment.

"I'm a strong believer that luxury should be comfortable. So every-

thing's custom made for these spaces," Glass adds.

On arrival, a dedicated lifestyle manager greets guests, not with a generic welcome, but with a personalized itinerary crafted in advance, taking into account their preferences and objectives for their stay. Champagne may be poured or wine from coveted bottles in the manse's private curated collection. Discussions of plans and wants will be raised in the living room, a comfortable arrangement of couches and oversized chairs in front of a custom-created fireplace and illuminated by a magnificent Andrea Braescu chandelier comprised of 600 porcelain leaves.

Perhaps it's arranging a private after-hours tour of the National Archives, led by a renowned historian, or securing a wish-list reservation at a Michelin-starred restaurant with a specific table and a customized tasting menu (or calling in a star chef for a grand meal event prepared in the gleaming LVIX kitchen). Maybe it's organizing a private yoga session with a noted instructor in the estate's tranquil gardens, followed by a rejuvenating massage in the spa house. Or it could be curating a personalized shopping experience at the city's most exclusive boutiques, with a stylist on hand to offer expert advice. Whatever the desire, the dedicated lifestyle management team works to make it happen.

For those more straightforward requirements, Josh, a virtual iPad assistant akin to Alexa, caters to guests' needs, from adjusting the lighting and ordering transportation to fulfilling any other desire. Staff will be instantly notified of guest requests via their personal devices. In the event of a security breach, high-profile guests can be swiftly escorted to safety through a hidden passageway equipped with

a spiral staircase. A dedicated app provides detailed information about the art and design elements within the manse, allowing guests to learn about the creators. Suppose guests find themselves loving the luxurious amenities, such as the Christoffle flatware, Duxiana bedding or curated art collections. In that case, they can effortlessly purchase these items through a tap on their phones.

The estate requires a three-day minimum for bookings and welcomes pets (custom furnishings have been fitted with soft but amazingly durable materials). It should be noted that some restrictions may apply during high-activity times, such as the upcoming presidential inauguration or annual Kennedy Center awards.

"Our goal was to kind of create a new genre, a new kind of stay or different kind of hospitality and I think we accomplished that," says Glass.

LVIX DC FAST FACTS

- 1 acre of manicured gardens
- 12,000 square-foot main house
- Separate ballroom
- Separate spa with sauna, steam room, cold plunge, hot tub, and full-size pool
- Full gym
- Yoga/meditation room
- 3 king-size suites
- 3 queen-size suites
- 14 bathrooms
- Security system and access control designed and vetted for heads of state and CEOs. Private back area for a dozen or more cars and valet services.

For inquiries, property details, or to make a booking, visit lxivgroup.com.

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6 tips to keep teenagers happy on vacation

BY HOLLY JOHNSON

TravelPulse

You planned the perfect vacation for your entire family, and your teenagers were more than happy to put their lives on hold to come along. But now that you're a few days into your trip, they're acting uninterested and staring at their phones for hours on end.

That last part is bad enough on its own, but their whole attitude is just killing the family vibe.

This is just the reality of traveling with teens, at least for a few hours here and there. I have certainly dealt with teen attitudes while traveling with my two girls, who are ages 13 and 15. They're pretty good most of the time, but we've definitely had unsavory moments during our travels with them to more than 40 countries over the last 10 years.

Fortunately, there are some moves to make that help keep hormones and bad teen attitudes at bay on vacation. Here are some of the tips I use to keep my teens happy as we travel around the world.

RESIST THE URGE TO OVERPLAN

It's easy to avoid planning too much when you're visiting an all-inclusive resort or renting a beach villa, whereas you may be tempted to plan a bunch of activities if you're opting for a sight-seeing trip somewhere new.

With my teenagers, I have found they're fairly eager to do one big "activity" every day, whether it's a hike through the mountains or a guided tour of a popular museum. However, they get crabby



DREAMTIME TNS

Teenagers may be much happier on vacation when they get some "wins" throughout the trip.

when we try to see or do too much in a single day and they don't get any downtime.

With that in mind, I try to plan one big family event each day for each trip we take to a sight-seeing destination. I fill the rest of the time with activities for myself and my husband only, and I leave plenty of free time on the agenda each day.

LEAVE THEM ALONE

This brings me to my next tip - leaving them alone. My husband and I tend to let our kids stay in our vacation rental alone for at least a few hours per day, whether it's during the evening while we dine or during the day while we sightsee or get some fresh

air.

Giving kids some alone time (and screen time) gives them space to disengage and relax while preserving the rest of their mental energy for family time. Of course, you need to be comfortable leaving your teens alone for several hours at a time for this tip to work, and we all know this is perfectly fine for some teenagers and not others.

LEAN INTO TEENAGE INTERESTS

We also let our kids get involved in the planning process, usually by asking what they want to do in destinations we're planning to visit. When we travel to Europe, for example, we ask them about

art they want to see, museums they want to explore or historical sites they may have learned about in school that should be on our radar.

When we take a warm weather trip, like visiting an all-inclusive resort or going on a cruise, we ask about the excursions they want to do and try to get them excited about the journey and destinations they're visiting.

SAY "YES" EVERY DAY

I have also found that teenagers are much happier on vacation when they get some "wins" under their belt throughout the trip. For us, that happens when we (their parents) say "yes" to a few things they want every

day, whether it's a stop for gelato, a new shirt or a pair of earrings from a local store.

We don't say "yes" to everything since that would derail our family travel budget in a hurry. However, saying "yes" here and there keeps them happy for longer periods, and that lets my husband and I enjoy the trip for that much longer.

DO SOMETHING THEY LOVE

Also consider planning a trip around something your kids love, whether it's a sporting event, a concert or a show. In our family, for example, we have traveled in and out of the United States for concerts to see artists like

Noah Kahan and The Lumineers (my teenager's favorites).

We also planned an entire trip around a Harry Styles concert in New York City once, then used the opportunity to see Broadway shows and check off some other sightseeing boxes while we were there. When we were in Italy for fall break this year, we surprised the kids with a day of riding coasters at the country's biggest theme park, Gardaland.

Also in this vein, my kids just love cruises to the Caribbean where everyone gets off and on the ship in the same place (unlike in Europe and other destinations where there are multiple points for embarkation). Having the same people on the ship for the entire cruise makes it so much easier for them to make friends during the trip, and they love going to the onboard teen clubs and forging connections with other kids. My kids are always asking when our next cruise is, so I go out of my way to plan a few of them over school breaks each year.

TRAVEL WITH FRIENDS

Finally, consider the prospect of planning a trip with family or friends. This can work especially well if you book a trip with another family that has adults and teenagers of their own, as long as everyone gets along.

We have done this several times in the past, both for all-inclusive resort trips and cruises and both times we traveled with other families where we were friends with the parents and the kids got along. It's always nice to give your teens some built-in friends to hang out with on vacation provided you know another family with a similar travel style and travel budget to work with.