

residency. In addition to people traveling from high-income countries to low-income countries to seek cheaper medical products, patients from low-income countries travel to high-income countries in search of better care. The estimated gross medical tourism revenues of \$40 billion worldwide in 2004 will increase to \$100 billion by 2012.²³ With a growing number of health travel agencies, it is becoming easier for travelers to schedule everything from complete physicals to complex surgeries more confidently.²⁴

In Singapore, some hospitals and hotels are partnering to offer packages that combine a hotel stay with a treatment package. Thailand's Tourism Ministry has aided the development of packages marketed to rich Arab patients. These packages feature shopping, sightseeing, and other activities for family members who are traveling with the loved one who is receiving treatment. The governments of South Korea and Taiwan are launching campaigns to promote medical tourism services in their countries. In an interesting twist, Indian nations in Canada are developing private hospitals so fellow Canadians can circumvent the Canadian ban on private-pay medical services by traveling to tribal lands where such laws do not apply.²⁵

Vocation and Real Estate Tourism

Very specialized niches are being served and should grow as tourism service suppliers strive to meet ever-changing needs and expectations. Culinary and heritage tourism definitely fit the concept of travel with a purpose, but new niches are appearing that do more than fulfilling physiological and psychological needs. For example, **vocation tourism** and **real estate tourism** are being marketed to meet travelers' needs seeking to combine pleasure with accomplishment.

Vocation and real estate vacations are catching on as travelers seek personal and often tangible benefits by combining relaxation and new experiences into practical leisure-time packages. On a vocation vacation, travelers take time to experience possible new careers before actually making career changes. You can think of these trips as being mini-internships. On a real estate vacation, travelers spend their time gaining in-depth knowledge and perspectives about the area from scheduled meetings with local experts while searching out potential investment opportunities or a second home.

Space Tourism

Someday in the not-too-distant future, we may be able to fly halfway around the globe in just minutes thanks to developments in scram jet engine technology that will allow for hypersonic flights. We have already witnessed the advent of space tourism as civilians have joined the ranks of astronauts on space voyages, but the numbers of space travelers will surely grow in coming years as hypersonic travel becomes a commercial reality. Just think, hypersonic travel made possible by scramjet engines will allow passengers to travel from New York to London in 11 minutes at an incredible speed of 18,000 miles per hour. This is not science fiction, as engineers around the globe are working on perfecting scramjet technology.

Space travel became a reality when the first space tourist, Dennis Tito, paid for a seat on a Russian Soyuz rocket and spent a week at the International Space Station in 2001 and this experience was repeated by Mark Shuttleworth the year after. The future of space tourism became a reality in 2004 when famed aircraft designer Burt Rutan and his team, with funding from Paul Allen, a Microsoft pioneer, was the first to successfully launch a privately developed manned spaceship, SpaceShipOne. They subsequently won the \$10 million Ansari X-Prize granted to the first team to launch two successful manned space launches within two weeks of each other. The team's invention gave Richard Branson the confidence to make the significant investment required to commercialize the prototype technology, thus creating the world's first spaceline, Virgin Galactic.