



TICKET TO RIDE

SEVEN SPACE TOURISTS PREPARE FOR LIFTOFF.

THE FUTURE IS NOW. Not the “Let’s-all-zoom-around-in-jet-packs” future. The one that says “**You want to go to space?** Here’s how.” It’s official: In the next few years, **the world’s citizen astronauts** will get their wings, care of Richard Branson’s **Virgin Galactic** – and no matter who you are, in the Americas, **you can only get a ticket through Virtuoso’s accredited space agents.** *Virtuoso Life* spoke to **seven eager space tourists** about their upcoming voyages into suborbit. **INTERVIEWED BY DAVID HOCHMAN**

ROB NIXON received his space ticket as a gift from his wife on his 40th birthday. "I'm a difficult person to shop for, but this one I liked," he laughs. As a consultant for top accounting firms and a motivational speaker, the Aussie native frequently talks up risk and reward. Now he's putting his money where his mouth is.

ON A 1 TO 10 SCALE, HOW MUCH OF A RISK TAKER ARE YOU?

"I'd say 9. I'm a risk taker in business, definitely. I've skydived 16 times. I've bungeed. I've ridden a boogie board through Grade III rapids in New Zealand. You don't get anywhere if you don't take risks."

WHY IS THIS WORTH THE PRICE OF ADMISSION?

"I've always seen myself as a leader in everything I do. This is something very few people are taking the punt on, and I think it's historic. I was born in 1969. Neil Armstrong landed on the moon two months before I was born. So I've always felt a call to space. But what's wonderful is, I can still call myself a pioneer and a space explorer. Plus, while it's only a two-hour adventure, the story will last a lifetime."

WHAT DO YOUR KIDS THINK?

"They're ecstatic. When they told their friends, however, nobody believed them."

ANYTHING SPECIAL PLANNED FOR ZERO GS?

"If they let me, I'd love to bring a satellite phone that works out there. I can't think of a better way to inspire my clients than by doing a teleconference call from space. I'd also like to get in some backflips."

WHAT'S BEEN THE TRIP OF YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

"When my wife and I celebrated 15 years of marriage, we did 15 days around the world first-class in five different countries, staying at five of the best hotels in the world. It was ridiculous



Running this year's London Marathon with team Virgin Galactic.

	ROB NIXON	AGE 41
	BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA	ENTREPRENEUR, SPEAKER, CONSULTANT
	TICKET NO. 293	MARRIED, THREE CHILDREN, AGES 10, 12, AND 14

and over the top. At the Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai, we had two spiral staircases in our suite and butler service on both floors. I don't live like that normally."

HOW WILL THIS TRIP CHANGE YOU?

"It's made me a more interesting person already. This trip involves a lot of other

Virgin experiences. We've been invited to Necker Island, to the unveiling of the spaceship in the American desert, to Sir Richard's private retreat in Morocco. I also ran in the London Marathon this year on the Virgin Galactic team. These are all out-of-this-world experiences, and we haven't even taken off yet."

(PORTRAIT) GEORGE FETTING



YOU HAVE YOUNG CHILDREN. ARE THEY EXCITED?

“They are pretty anxious, actually. I don’t talk about it in front of them. My daughter tells me to drive safe every time I get in the car. I’m a single parent, so they’re nervous about me not coming back.”

HOW DOES THIS COMPARE TO YOUR USUAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCE?

“It’s unlike anything I have ever done. I’m a city guy. A vacation for me is Paris and

Prague and London or Rome. This year, I want to go to Turkey or Morocco and sink in the rich culture.”

ANY MUSIC YOU’D LIKE TO LISTEN TO IN SPACE?

“I love ‘One’ by U2.”

WHAT WILL YOU DO DURING ZERO GRAVITY?

“Oh, I think I’m just going to stare with my mouth open, taking it all in.”

JOSH RESNICK made his fortune creating best-selling video games like *Star Wars Battlefront* and *The Lord of the Rings: Conquest*. His travel tastes are more erudite than adventurous, but for this trip, he decided to up the ante. He’s also bringing along a special companion.

TWO TICKETS?

“Yes. I’m taking my mom [Rheta Resnick, 75, a Virtuoso travel advisor in Pacific Palisades, California]. I hadn’t planned on it, but when I told her I was taking my best friend and cousin, she said, ‘Oh, no. Take me.’ We should be on the 19th flight.”

WHAT MADE YOU SAY, “I HAVE TO DO THIS”?

“It’s not a midlife crisis. But I did hit age 40 and I was purposely looking for something unique and life changing. Mainly because I’m a wimp and don’t do shark cages, bungee jump, or jump out of planes. I was fortunate enough to have the funds, though, and this experience fits the bill for being exciting and different enough.”

WERE YOU ALWAYS A SPACE BUFF?

“One of my earliest memories was watching the first men walk on the moon. I remember the whole family gathering around, though I was very young. That didn’t lead to a particular interest in space, but I do cherish that memory.”

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO BE CALLED ASTRONAUT RESNICK?

“Anyone who travels above 50 miles gets that title, but I hardly feel qualified. I would never want to take away from real astronauts who train a lifetime for this. No, this is just a wild adventure.”

	JOSH RESNICK	AGE 43
	LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA	VIDEO GAME DESIGNER
	TICKET NOS. 115, 116	SINGLE FATHER, THREE CHILDREN, AGES 9, 11, AND 13



(PORTRAIT) JOE SCHMELZER

The minute **JOE HOLLINGSWORTH** starts talking, it's clear he's enjoying life. "I love to do original things," he says in a big Tennessee drawl. In addition to his achievements as a property developer, Hollingsworth has a long list of done-that's, from hang gliding and Formula One auto racing to deep-sea fishing off the Great Barrier Reef. Space? No problem.

WHY IS THIS WORTH \$200,000 TO YOU?

"If it was just about the money, I wouldn't have done it. It's for the adventure, for the sheer joy. This is the ultimate trip. Fewer than 1,000 humans have been into space. Just thinking about that gives me chill bumps!"

WERE YOU ALWAYS INTERESTED IN SPACE TRAVEL?

"I've always been intrigued by flight, certainly. I do hang gliding, mostly on tandem kites. We landed on the beach in Ipanema once. Boy, that was fun! I've taken flights on biwings that did some flips. But I always dreamed of seeing a major part of Earth's surface from space. When I first read about Sir Richard's program, I flew out to Albuquerque and signed up right there on the spot."

WHAT'S BEEN THE TRIP OF YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

"I put together a 30-day cruise on a 118-foot yacht with a crew of six for four couples. We started at the bottom of the Caribbean in Grenada and island-hopped our way through 22 islands in a month. The fun part was, three couples would get off every six days, and three new couples would get on. My personal highlight was the 11-mile pink-sand beach in Barbuda. Jiminy!"

WHAT WAS IT LIKE MEETING RICHARD BRANSON?

"I spent a week on Necker Island as part of this, and let me tell you, that is one fun-loving, humble guy for a billionaire several times over. He's terribly inquisitive and kind. I was extremely impressed by him."

WHAT WILL YOU PACK IN YOUR CARRY-ON BAG?

"I haven't thought about that. But, hey, I just flashed on a vial of dirt I have. It's from the



	JOE HOLLINGSWORTH JR.	
	CLINTON, TENNESSEE	AGE 59 INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPER, ENTREPRENEUR
	TICKET NO. 177	DIVORCED, TWO CHILDREN

plot in England where the name Hollingsworth originates way back in the Norman Conquest. Heck, I'll bring that."

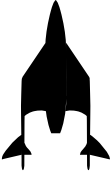
HOW ARE YOUR CHILDREN REACTING TO HAVING AN ASTRONAUT FOR A DAD?

"They've been remarkably positive and have, I think, a real sense of pride."

HOW WILL THIS TRIP CHANGE YOU?

"Every trip changes me a little. As an entrepreneur, I'm always on the lookout for experiences to draw focus and inspiration from, whether it's a camel ride through the Sinai Desert or rounding a curve in a Formula One Dodge at 130 miles an hour. I can't imagine what doing somersaults at 360,000 feet will do."

TAMARA REYNOLDS

	GLENYS AMBE	AGE: 57 FASHION RETAILER SINGLE, NO CHILDREN
	BRISBANE, AUSTRALIA	
	TICKET NO. 521	



GLENYS AMBE was the first Australian to buy a space ticket, but then, she's always been an early adopter. She ran a personal-fitness-training business before it was trendy, got out of radio before times got tough, and now runs a pair of chic boutiques in Brisbane, Australia. "I've always been someone who kind of treads my own path," she says.

WERE YOU ALWAYS INTERESTED IN SPACE TRAVEL?

"Always! I'm old enough to remember the

first monkeys and dogs going into space, and the only day I ever waggged school was the day they walked on the moon in 1969. It's always been a dream."

WHAT'S BEEN THE TRIP OF YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

"I've done a lot of travel. My dad used to love going on cruises. In 1965, we did a cherry blossom cruise to Japan out of Sydney. We were the first passenger ship to visit Guam since World War II, and they declared it a school holiday so we could use the island

school buses. Japan had just hosted the Olympic Games, so there was excitement there. Then it was on to Hong Kong and the Philippines. I was 12 or 13 at the time, and what stands out was a sign at a restaurant in Manila that said, 'Please leave your firearms at the door.' Funny how some things stick."

WHY IS THIS WORTH \$200,000 TO YOU?

"This was an early 60th-birthday present to myself. I read about Virgin Galactic in the newspaper one morning and noticed that my friend Greg Wilkin was the local agent. How cool, I thought. Then I bumped into Greg at a local coffee shop and said, 'Well, fancy meeting you here. I think I'll sign up.'"

WHAT WAS YOUR FAMILY'S FIRST REACTION?

"I would love my parents to be alive to share the thrill. I know that, if my dad had been alive and able, we would have gone on the same flight. That would have been a truly fabulous experience to share. I am thinking of taking his photo up with me. My mother would have gone, 'Why?' But dear old Dad would have been arm in arm with me signing up. He had a passion for travel."

WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE?

"You're part of something momentous. For so many years, something like this was an absolute dream, a crazy idea. But to see a pie-in-the-sky idea become very concrete and very real, it's sensational!"

ARE YOU LOOKING FORWARD TO WEIGHTLESSNESS?

"I was a dancer for a long time, and you always strive to give that illusion of weightlessness. In those giant leaps, there's a moment on the parabolic curve where you can just about fake it. But to have about four minutes of that! That will be awesome."

WHAT SORT OF SNACK WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE IN SPACE?

"Jaffas! They're like Maltesers. The inside is chocolate, the outside is orange. You have to throw them in the air and catch them in your mouth. All the professional astronauts do it."

The miracle isn't that **SHEILA KESSLER** is going to space. It's that she's still alive. After she was diagnosed in September 2008 with aggressive Stage IV lung cancer, doctors gave her three months to live. But treatment, coupled with her raw determination to join this adventure, keeps this management coach and consultant looking ahead – and up.

WHAT DOES THIS TRIP MEAN TO YOU?

“When I came out of the hospital, I already had my race-to-space goal outlined. I knew I needed a great big audacious goal. So while the \$200,000 was definitely a stretch for me, I thought it was worth it. I'm on borrowed time.”

WHAT KIND OF REACTION DID YOU GET?

“In my condition, nobody's going to make a fuss and say, ‘Don't go.’ Everyone wants me to do this. I only wish I could bring my husband along.”

WHEN DID YOU GET INTERESTED IN SPACE TRAVEL?

“My uncle took me up for a ride in an airplane on his farm in Indiana at age 6. I had my pilot's license in graduate school. Then I actually applied to become an astronaut. I made it to the final 40 from 4,000, but that's still a long way to the final people that NASA chose. Space remained a fascination. I spent a week at Space Camp at the Cosmosphere in Kansas about six years ago, but that was all simulation. I'm definitely ready for the real McCoy.”

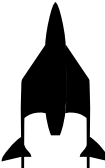
WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST PART ABOUT SIGNING UP SO FAR?

“Richard Branson has staged several awe-inspiring events. The rocket rollout last December in the Mojave was so cool. We got to fly the simulator. They served drinks on a bar made out of ice. There was a drumroll and hoopla for the birth of this rocket. It's just so exciting. It's the best of mankind, the best of creativity, of people fighting uphill battles and being persistent. A commercialized space program! That's no easy deal.”

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 10, HOW DO YOU RATE AS A RISK TAKER?

“Between a 6 and a 7. We recently returned from Antarctica. Sounds adventurous, but we



	SHEILA KESSLER, Ph.D.	
	SAN CLEMENTE, CALIFORNIA	ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTANT, EXECUTIVE COACH
	TICKET NO. 311	MARRIED, NO CHILDREN

did it the wimpy way – on a Celebrity Cruise. That's not to say we didn't face hurricane-force winds at one point. But then we look out and see the only other boat on the horizon – a 22-foot sailboat! Now, *that* person is a 10!”

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SPEND YOUR MOMENTS OF WEIGHTLESSNESS?

“My husband is also a pilot, and early on we did a lot of aerobatics, where you achieve a kind of weightlessness in small doses. It's fun but disorienting. I think the most interesting part will be dancing with the other passengers in space to get those views of Earth from the portals. I'm really looking forward to that choreography.”

DOING IT Virgin Galactic selected **Virtuoso accredited space agents** as the exclusive providers in the Americas for its suborbital missions. Flight testing is well under way, the runway has been poured at Spaceport America, and some 335 passengers have reserved their spots so far. *Departures: Passenger flights are on track to take off in the next few years; from \$200,000, with a minimum \$20,000 deposit.*



➔ Scan this tag to watch the debut of Virgin Galactic's spaceship *Enterprise*, along with a flight simulation, on your smartphone. See page 16 for complete instructions.

SITAL SAL JAIN is heading to space because he's practically run out of destinations on Earth. After success in the construction business, Jain, who immigrated from England 40 years ago, retired to follow his college dreams of filmmaking and extreme adventures. He's since done both, trekking to the North and South poles, tenting his way through Mongolia, and, this year, huffing his way to Everest Base Camp. What's next? Ah, yes.

WHAT MADE YOU THINK, "I HAVE TO DO THIS"?

"The minute I heard about Virgin Galactic, I knew. I always wanted to go to space but couldn't afford the \$20 million the Russians were charging. This is a bargain by comparison. I'm an extreme adventurer, and I always wonder how I can top one adventure with the next."

HOW WILL YOU TOP SPACE TRAVEL?

"I believe in ten years we will have a floating hotel that will let us go even further. Someday, perhaps not in my lifetime, they will have a station at the moon. There's no end to adventure. No end."

WHAT WAS YOUR FAMILY'S INITIAL REACTION?

"They're used to me taking risks. We have an established system: I go alone and do my best to come back in one piece. Besides, my wife prefers sightseeing trips to Europe. I don't want to torture her with an extreme adventure."

VIRGIN GALACTIC'S FORCES MAY BRIEFLY PEAK AT SIX GS. ARE YOU CONCERNED?

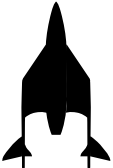
"My fear is quite acute. You enter Earth's atmosphere very quickly, and there's apparently

a heavy jolt. But 188 people will go before me, so that gives me a measure of comfort."

WHAT'S BEEN THE TRIP OF YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

"The most adventurous certainly was the South Pole in December 2007. You go from the southern shore of Chile and then head

south for 1,000 long miles. We flew on the world's largest cargo plane. What I didn't know was that the South Pole is 9,000 feet high. The thickness of ice at that level just boggles the senses. My lasting memory is of being on the top of the world where only a few humans venture to go. So beautiful, so enthralling – I felt privileged being there."

	SITAL SAL JAIN	AGE 72
	SCARSDALE, NEW YORK	CIVIL ENGINEER, REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER
	TICKET NO. 189	MARRIED, TWO CHILDREN, ONE GRANDCHILD



Sital Sal Jain and Richard Branson at the spaceship *Enterprise's* rollout party.

(PORTRAIT) MIKI DUSTERHOF

Passionate about travel and tourism his entire life, Virtuoso's enthusiastic globe-trotter-in-chief logs roughly 230 travel days a year. But it's his upcoming two-hour space odyssey that **MATTHEW UPCHURCH** is currently most starry-eyed about.

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO BUY A SPACE TICKET?

"It's a funny story. Literally 30 seconds before we first announced the exclusive alliance between Virtuoso and Virgin Galactic in 2006 in New York, Stephen Attenborough, the commercial director of Virgin Galactic, turned to me and said, 'So, if you're thinking about buying a ticket, now would be a good time to tell me.' I made a snap decision. Of course I was going!"

ISN'T \$200,000 EXPENSIVE FOR A TWO-HOUR FLIGHT?

"Let me put it in perspective: The last citizen astronaut to go into space had to pay \$35 million and train for nine months. From a value standpoint, this is infinitely more practical."

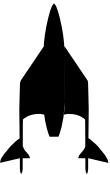
ARE YOU AN ADVENTURER BY NATURE?

"Not at all! I'm not a thrill-seeker. I never wanted to be an astronaut. But this trip is the ultimate essence of what I love about travel. It forces you to disconnect with the familiar and see the world from a new perspective. Everyone who has ever been to space says it is a life-changing experience. Looking down and seeing no borders, glimpsing the thin blue line that keeps us safe – this is a pioneering trip."

WHAT'S BEEN YOUR TRIP OF A LIFETIME SO FAR?

"From a sheer spectacle standpoint, I would point to a four-day canoe trip through Mana Pools National Park in Zimbabwe. The water is like glass. You have a canoe guide and a walking safari guide who literally tracks lions on foot for the most amazing encounters. At one point, you paddle to the middle of the Zambezi. The guide jumps out, grabs your paddle. Next thing you know you're sipping Champagne at lunch at a table on a sandbar in the middle of the river with 20 hippos smiling at you. Unbelievable!"



	MATTHEW UPCHURCH	
	FORT WORTH, TEXAS	
	TICKET NO. As a Galactic Founder, Upchurch is in the lottery for a seat on flights 2 through 16.	AGE 48 CEO OF VIRTUOSO MARRIED, FIVE CHILDREN

HOW IS YOUR FAMILY REACTING?

"They are beyond excited. I've got a 5-year-old who's watched the DVD of the simulation at least 100 times."

"I'm as passionate about entrepreneurialism as I am about travel, and this is the ultimate example of that spirit. Some of the most talented, committed entrepreneurs on Earth decided to take on the bureaucracies and push for change, to live the dream of space flight." VI

WHAT'S BEEN THE BEST PART OF THIS EXPERIENCE SO FAR?