



INTERNATIONAL TRENDS

Cavago's come to town

With enthusiastic customers worldwide and more than 250 providers already signed up, Cavago has made their mark, writes **JESSICA MORTON**.



Cavago has quickly become the fastest-growing booking platform for equestrian activities around the globe. Sometimes compared to other online accommodation platforms, Cavago's point of difference is in finding unique equestrian experiences and destinations, and bringing them together in one easy-to-use site where you can find the perfect riding activity whatever your destination.

As the first service of its kind, the startup aims to revolutionise the equine tourism industry, streamlining scheduling and payments, and helping users spend less time organising their riding holiday and more time in the saddle.

Online offerings

Equestrian travel agencies have played an important role in the success of the equine tourism industry. However, there is a catch. The agencies sometimes take at least 20 per cent in commissions, and through exclusivity contracts often limit who tourism providers can promote with – restricting them from selling directly to clients, or accepting customers from rival agencies.

However, more people now prefer to do their own research in order to turn their dream riding holiday into a reality. By offering an extensive selection of unique riding experiences, booking apps

like Cavago make the process faster and much easier – no more searching for hours online. Their automated booking experience helps users and providers find one another quickly, removes potential language barriers, and links users, providers and hosts who otherwise may not have connected.

Marketing where it matters

Once a host partnership is established, an online listing for that provider is created and linked to a booking engine that can process client requests and payments directly.

Upcoming trips and last-minute discounts are promoted on social media platforms and through regular email marketing blasts to help the provider stand out from their competitors. And since bookings on the app don't require a dedicated travel agent, commissions are kept to a minimum. Reservation tasks such as up-to-date availability, pricing and scheduling can be automated, so providers spend less time thinking about marketing and sales and more time running their business.

An easier way

Singapore-based CEO Tauseef Qadri, himself a passionate horseman, says the impetus behind Cavago was to create a global network of horse businesses and a convenient system where enthusiasts of all disciplines could find a place to ride. "Cavago is the first travel app to connect equestrians, providers, and travel agents on the same platform; where users can effortlessly book private riding lessons, multi-day treks or tailor-made experiences no matter where in the world they find themselves," he adds. "Searching for a place to ride within the network is as easy as inputting a location and activity and choosing from the broad selection of providers listed in the app."

A Cavago user simply needs to choose a price range, location, and travel dates to browse through a selection of listings complete with images, reviews, and



FACING PAGE: Cavago founder Tauseef Qadri is a passionate horseman. **ABOVE:** The Yeguada Cartuja stud near Jerez, Spain, is home to the magnificent Carthusian Andalusian.

video footage to ensure the property or activity suits them. Recurring activities like riding lessons or weekly horse treks can be managed on the app's dedicated calendar. And after just a few bookings, Cavago's advanced interface recognises your preferences and recommends the perfect riding itinerary when you next travel.

Protection for providers

Trekking centres and riding schools can use the app to protect themselves against no-shows or late arrivals with a customised cancellation policy connected to their listing. If the client doesn't arrive or cancels outside of the specified timeframe, the provider can choose to enforce the cancellation policy and not lose money.

Billing and receiving cash-free payments in advance is another advantage, significantly reducing the time spent scheduling and collecting fees for services and activities. The app can also send monthly agistment invoices, schedule weekly riding lessons, and collect extra one-off payments from clients.

Tauseef explains that because of these features, providers can now confidently process bookings on the app. "One of our providers runs horse and carriage tours in Portugal. In the past, due to a lack of card payment processing options, she lost clients. Sometimes in order to receive payment, she had to find her client's bank and wait on the road with the horses. Thanks to the Cavago app, she has a QR code on the

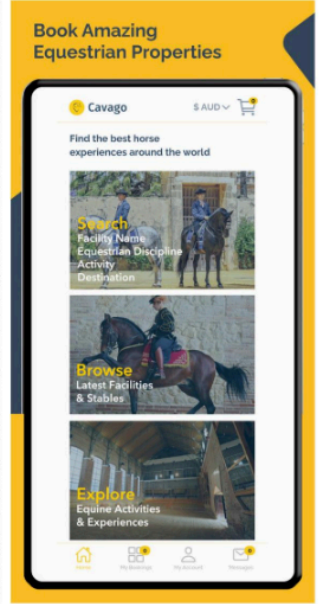
carriage door that clients can use to pay for her services with their phone before they climb inside."

Disruptive tech

In equestrian tourism, it's not just what you offer that counts; it's who knows about it. Getting a product, trip, or experience in front of the eyes of potential customers isn't always easy – especially in a niche market. Plus, the pandemic has changed the way people travel.

With many small businesses struggling to navigate these uncertain economic times while keeping their families, employees, and horses fed, Cavago's goal of creating the world's largest community of horse lovers might be just what many providers need for that essential visibility and support when it's most needed.

Besides, at the end of the day, the world always looks better from the back of a horse! 🐾



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