Luxury hotels bring holiday cheer to guests

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Luxury hotels craft activities to welcome guests during the holidays and ensure comfort as they travel.

Offering different activities, packages and deals allows hotel brands to create a deeper relationship with guests as they are away from home during the holiday season. This year initiatives include the entire family, gift card options, philanthropic actions and holiday-themed decorations and activities.

“Having unique and special holiday offerings add everything to the guest experience,” said Marc Anderson, regional director of marketing at Peninsula Hotels, Chicago.

“It takes the guest experience to a whole new level when the hotel offers experiences that are more than expected,” he said. “It is the basis for starting and continuing holiday traditions for people.”

Giving a little more
Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is aiming to swell traffic in 2015 with an updated holiday gift card campaign.
Instead of focusing solely on the rooms that guests can book, the hotel chain is emphasizing the experiences that can be purchased with the cards. In doing so, Four Seasons is reminding consumers that its properties are more than places to sleep, although guests who enjoy this feature can use their cards to purchase Four Seasons mattresses (see story).

Regular holiday guests of the hotel might benefit from the gift cards to make their stay a little more special by partaking in the hotel’s holiday activities. For instance, at Four Seasons Florence, guests can dine with the hotel and its Michelin-starred chef for Christmas Eve dinner, Christmas Day lunch or New Year's Eve dinner.

SnowPage

Peninsula Hotels holiday spirit culminates on a SnowPage microsite that features a festive mascot that is woven into digital and in-store efforts.

A number of seasonal offers are girded by charity initiatives that remind consumers of the hotel chain’s engagement in the community at large. Centralizing its holiday efforts around the SnowPage symbol may grant Peninsula’s various offers a dose of unity, while acting as an anchor in the busy holiday season (see story).

The charity initiatives of Peninsula Hotels are to benefit children’s charities, including various Make-A-Wish Foundation chapters.
“This year there is a campaign of charitable giving, benefitting Make-A-Wish, centered around SnowPage, a snowman dressed as Peninsula’s mascot, a page,” Peninsula’s Mr. Anderson said. “The SnowPage is featured throughout the hotel in décor and in treats provided to guests and children. Guests are asked to use #SnowPage and follow Peninsula’s social media channels and a donation is made on their behalf by Peninsula to Make-A-Wish.”

Mandarin Oriental Singapore is also looking to aid children this season with cookie sales that benefit children suffering from chronic and potentially life threatening diseases. The foundation is called Club Rainbow, so the hotel is selling rainbow cookies to assist the kids and their families.

Kids Corner
Holidays are often a time of family outings and experiences. Many luxury hotels are embodying this notion in their plans for the holidays.

At The Ritz-Carlton San Francisco, children are invited to bring their stuffed animals to see a holiday show starring an elf and his teddy bear sidekick. Participating families are served treats and tea during the show.

“As part of The Ritz-Carlton's brand-wide Ritz Kids program, we are dedicated to ensuring that the kids of The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco are encouraged to explore the environment around them,” said Bruce Gorelick, general manager at The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco.

“It brings us great joy to know that we can provide a learning and growing experience for children during their stay with us by encouraging them to engage in the four important pillars of Ritz Kids discovery: Water, Land, Environmental Responsibility and Culture,” he said.

Peninsula Chicago also treats young guests to a visit from Peter Bear, the hotel’s mascot, and Santa Claus and has a sky rink that offers ice skating to guests.
Decorators touch
Making guests feel as if it is the holiday season stems largely from the decorations used by hotels.

Swarovski crystal is found in many of the hotel brand’s decorations.

For instance, at Rosewood Hotel Georgia there is a 12-foot Swarovski Christmas tree that is decked out in 200 Swarovski crystal ornaments in the hotel’s lobby.

At Four Seasons Beirut, a tree created by artist Toni Breiss is made out of 20,000 Swarovski crystals.

*Swarovski tree at Four Seasons Beirut*

Other festive decorations include a 6-foot tall, 3-foot wide edible chocolate Christmas tree made of 600 pounds of chocolate at Rosewood Hotel’s Sand Hill, CA, property.
“Rosewood Sand Hill’s beautiful holiday décor and activities enhance the experience for our overnight guests while also helping us to create a special holiday tradition and connection with local patrons from the community,” said Alan Campey, managing director of Rosewood Sand Hill, CA. “People love to come by to see the stunning chocolate displays created by our pastry chef and enjoy a seasonal cocktail or festive meal at our signature restaurant, Madera.”

Final Take

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