

MOBILE

## BMW, Starwood ahead of the curve with Apple Watch apps

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*BMW's Apple Watch app*

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By NANCY BUCKLEY

While consumers and luxury watchmakers awaited the Apple Watch, other brands chose to focus on its app possibilities.

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**Luxury Daily**

After much anticipation, the Apple Watch has been revealed, but fresh expectations arise as apps are created for the new technology. Starwood Hotels & Resorts and automaker BMW are among the brands developing and releasing apps for the watch that will connect with affluent consumers captivated by the newest technology and looking for better high-touch service.

"The SPG app for Apple Watch will provide guests with the information they need, when they need it, like the address of the hotel in the local language before they arrive and their confirmation number when they arrive at the property for the first time," said Stephen Gates, vice president and digital creative director, global brand design at [Starwood](#).

Latest ideas

Starwood's Apple Watch app will be similar to the brand's mobile app. The keyless features are present for its Element, Aloft and W Hotels, but the app's other features will be

at the hotelier's other brands, such as St. Regis.

While hotels have been struggling to leverage mobile keys for years due to a fragmented smartphone industry, varying mobile signal standards and pricey lock system upgrades, Starwood Hotels and Hilton Worldwide are making them a reality with roll outs planned for this year and next.

Starwood Hotels launched the mobile technology at its Element, 10 Aloft and W Hotels, with plans for 140 more of its properties to receive mobile keys ([see story](#)). The addition of the keyless feature to the Apple Watch is expected to roll out in April.



### *Social media on Apple Watch*

The other features include promotions and offers, information about hotels and ability to store the room number. Guests will be able to provide information about current and upcoming stays such as directions and reservation details. Also, guests can check-in from their watch.

Additionally, the guest will be able to access their Starwood Preferred Guest Account from the watch.

Germany's BMW will also have an app that will serve as an iRemote that will allow owners to check the charge status of their electric BMW i. Owners will be notified when

the car is fully charged and will be able to check the range, door locks and service reminders.



### *Starwood's app*

Also, app users will be able to adjust the temperature in their BMW i as they approach the car.

“BMW is thrilled that BMW iRemote is one of the launch apps available on the Apple Watch,” said a spokesperson from BMW. “With the BMW i3 and BMW i8, sustainability meets visionary design, and this new innovation from Apple will enable BMW to provide customers with next-level connectivity to their vehicles from their wrists.”

### Connection is key

Consumers are extremely connected through many different digital touchpoints, and it is up to retailers to use these opportunities to connect with their clients, according to a new report from IDC.

The report highlights the top 10 critical decisions retailers must make for the upcoming year. It may help luxury brands better understand how they should adjust their initiatives to best accommodate the evolving consumer ([see story](#)).

Providing the latest technology experience may help luxury brands reach out to the younger consumers and will likely add ease to their experiences.

“Once they have checked in, the app will let guests easily access the most commonly needed information like their room number, directions back to the hotel and the ability to unlock their hotel room door with SPG Keyless," Starwood's Mr. Gates said.

Final Take

*Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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