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Travel + Leisure implements Web, print updates to channel visual storytelling

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Travel + Leisure updates for the modern reader

By JEN KING

Time Inc.'s Travel + Leisure has reworked its print format to account for its Web site overhaul to better express the title's content to its passionate and travel-focused readership.

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For its relaunch, on both Web and in print, Travel + Leisure is exploring different formats that put travel storytelling at the forefront of its content. As Time Inc.'s first truly travel-focused title, since it acquired the publication from American Express Publishing, newly instated editor-in-chief Nathan Lump had the opportunity to revamp the readers' experience across channels.

"Travel + Leisure had a strong audience in this vertical and had market share of advertisements for the last 10 years – [the brand] was in a strong place," said Jay Meyer, publisher of Travel + Leisure, New York. "We had just come over from American Express to Time Inc. and the market capital of American Express is $80 billion. It's a financial company, so it's a different company to navigate versus a media company such as Time Inc.

"Time Inc.'s focus has been what you know," he said. "This was a new vertical for them, asked us to help them understand travel."

Travel + Leisure, owned by Time Inc. since 2013, has a circulation of 973,834.

Wanderlust reads

As a $7.6 trillion industry that in many ways is larger than the fashion business, travel coverage that caters to the interests and passion points of travelers in print and online has had immense support from Travel + Leisure's publisher, Time Inc.

"This audience is super desirable because also in addition to being passionate travelers," said Nathan Lump, editor in chief of Travel + Leisure, New York. "If you travel 23 times a year, you must have a passion for it. Thirteen of those trips are business, but travelers have a strong spending mindset.

"So much of what the relaunch is about is about taking what has always been strong about Travel + Leisure, which I think is a sensitivity to the kind of things this audience is looking for," he said.

For the redesigned Web presence, Mr. Lump and his team developed a new homepage for Travel + Leisure that updated its old site from a busy, text-heavy format to a more modern and immersive design.

The new Travel + Leisure homepage opens with a grid of six images associated with content housed on the site. With the Travel + Leisure logo located in the center of the images, the space is meant to represent the publication's universe.

Also at the top is a collapsible navigation bar that gives Travel + Leisure's desktop site a nod to mobile. To that effect, the new Web site is fully responsive across devices to ensure that readers can interact with the title in the way in which is most comfortable.

Travel + Leisure's new homepage opener

For advertisers, the site redesign allows for 100 percent advertisement visibility as well as seamless ad unit integration, a move that showcases Travel + Leisure as modern from a business perspective.

Web-based content is presented in a refreshed look and feel that is consistent with the

publication's redesign as a whole. This works to create a cleaner user experience that uses visuals as a motivator rather than copy.

In addition to larger imagery and slideshow functions, Travel + Leisure has also aggregated its Instagram feed into the residence Web site. The publication has seen incredible engagement on Instagram and it has become its fastest growing social channel (see story).

Travel + Leisure's redesign includes seamless ad integration and Instagram content

As for content found on the Web site most will be original to the Web platform, but with some cross pollination from print to digital. Going forward, the new Travel + Leisure Web site will enable the publication to output a larger amount of content, bumping production from about 12 digital posts per week to nearly 20 per day.

Print support
Updated alongside its Web companion, Travel + Leisure's print edition, with May's edition ushering in the change, focuses on the content but in a lighter, more colorful, more design centric way. With storytelling leading the way, just as it does digitally, Travel + Leisure plays around with how travel experiences can be shared in print.

Notable updates include new fonts, although the publication's logo remains the untouched, specific to Travel + Leisure, and a more creative approach. Also, update sections aim to up storytelling rather than simply state travel tips and recommendations.

Travel + Leisure's new look and feel for May 2015

For example, the new Beyond section gives readers a storytelling experience in the front of the book, whereas in the older format, travel narratives were reserved for the features well. Additionally, Artist View features artwork commissioned by an artist regarding a specific place as an artistic representation of travel and the Takeaway section highlights items purchased while at a destination due to the audience's spending power and the character of a place as shown through local items.

Mr. Meyer noted that Travel + Leisure's advertising partners came out to support the redesign in a big way. The revamped edition is the largest May book since 2008 with 200 total pages, advertising and editorial, compared to 170 from the year-ago.

Notable advertisers in the May issue include Hermès, Dolce & Gabbana, Cartier, Roberto Coin, Tiffany & Co., Armani fragrance and Porsche. Hotels showed huge support for the redesign with The Peninsula Hotels, Ritz-Carlton—new to the May issue, Rosewood, Shangri-La and Taj Hotels Resorts and Palaces taking pages.

Travel + Leisure's print and digital redesign comes from an understanding of today's reader and advertiser expectations.

"[The publication has a] sophisticated point of view on travel, a lot of expertise and knowingness around what's going on, being ahead of the curve and also an embrace of

the various lifestyle topics that intersect with travel whether that's design or art or style or food and wine," Mr. Lump said.

"This brand has paid attention to these things and thats really been part of the core DNA and what the relaunch is about is modernizing the creative expression of that DNA and being sensitive to the different ways that that audience is engaging with us and looking to us in different platforms," he said. "Understanding that the mindset [readers] come to us in print is not the same mindset they come to us in digital.

"That's why I was so set on doing print and digital at the same time. You have to think about them in the context of each other."

Final Take
Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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