

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Fortnum & Mason takes culinary offerings to the countryside

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*Grange Park estate*

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By SARAH JONES

British retailer Fortnum & Mason is partnering with opera festival Grange Park this summer to bring its own flair to the cultural experience.

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Those attending the multi-weekend affair on the estate in Hampshire can order a Fortnum's a pre-packed hamper to dine on the store's signature food hall offerings, such as lobster and caviar. This will help the retailer remain a presence in Londoners' plans as they venture out to the countryside for the summer months.

"Fortnum & Mason's partnership with opera festival Grange Park is a smart partnership and a move towards a larger trend here: brands are trying new ways to engage customers outside of traditional merchandising and advertising," Nicole Larrauri, managing partner at [EGC Group](#), Melville, NY.

"Tactics like event and experiential marketing are being seen more and more as consumers want unique experiences over giveaways and promotions," she said.

Ms. Larrauri is not affiliated with Fortnum & Mason, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Fortnum & Mason did not respond by press deadline.

Skipping town

The Grange is a mansion and estate dating back to the 1600s. In 1975, owner John Baring put the building under the guardianship of the Department of the Environment, which is now known as English Heritage.

In 1998, the park held its first summer opera festival with the support of private donors.



*Theater at Grange Park*

Today, corporate sponsors include Fortnum & Mason and Champagne brand Laurent Perrier.

This year, the event runs from June 4-18, with the musical “Fiddler on the Roof,” Tchaikovsky’s “Eugene Onegin,” Puccini’s “La Boheme” and Saint Saens’ “Samson et Dalila.”

Before tickets went on sale, Fortnum & Mason consumers were given a 10-day priority booking period before they were available to the general public.

While Grange Park does offer in-door dining options, consumers often choose to picnic on the grounds to take advantage of the scenery, as well as meet new people. Fortnum & Mason is providing culinary experiences to consumers through special hampers available for purchase.

The menu includes a prix fixe “Intimate Picnic” for two for about \$110, which includes pork pie with apple chutney, a cheeseboard, York ham with herb coleslaw, a green salad and lemon and raspberry posset to finish.



*Fortnum & Mason hamper*

Another option is a “Family Feast,” starting at about \$94 per person, in which consumers pick and choose from favorites such as an asparagus and goat cheese tart, smoked fish and a chocolate tart with vanilla Chantilly.

For decadent diners, there is “The Fortnum’s Banquet,” with options of foie gras, quail eggs and an exotic fruit platter.

In addition to spots on the lawn, consumers can book a table in a tent or reserve their own individual private pavilion for more privacy.



*Couple picnicking at Grange Park*

Bringing the opera in-store, Grange Park has set up a “one-seater opera” in the retailer’s Piccadilly flagship. A red phone booth allows one listener to enjoy music in a plush theater-style chair.

Outdoor dining

Fortnum & Mason has previously brought its fare to an outdoor festival to reach

consumers in an unexpected locale.

The retailer partnered with the Port Eliot Festival in Cornwall, England, to reach foodies outside of its store.

For the festival, which ran from July 24-27, Fortnum & Mason offered dinner service, a pop-up bar and special hampers created with festival-goers in mind. By bringing the in-store food experience to an outdoor venue in the countryside, Fortnum & Mason was able to connect with consumers outside of the London area, who may now be more inclined to visit on their next trip to the city ([see story](#)).

Fortnum & Mason also shows its appreciation for art through cuisine.

For example, the department store hosted a Champagne brunch March 8 to celebrate the artwork of Peter Paul Rubens at its Gallery restaurant.

The morning's event was in partnership with The Royal Academy of Arts and the Guardian to create an exclusive viewing guided by a museum expert. Fortnum & Mason's involvement in the celebration of Mr. Rubens' artistic career helped to further establish the retailer as a patron of the arts, a position held in high regard among many luxury brands and the retailer's consumers ([see story](#)).

For Fortnum & Mason, this collaboration with Grange Park will likely build awareness through organic word of mouth.

"We predict that this will open up the retailer to new customers, and should cause a spike in online and social brand mentions as more and more customers share their experience," Ms. Larrauri said.

Final Take

*Sarah Jones, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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