

MOBILE

Dorchester Collection takes to Instagram for summer storytelling

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Dorchester Collection Instagram post

By JOE MCCARTHY

Hotelier Dorchester Collection is inviting fans to vicariously attend a picnic at the Palace of Versailles in France through Instagram to promote culinary adventures.

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Luxury Daily

The brand's Plaza Athénée hosted the picnic and showcased some of the attractions that prospective guests can expect if they travel to Paris and stay with Dorchester Collection. Instagram is increasingly becoming the preferred social media platform for luxury brands because of its pithy, visual nature and high engagement rates.

"Owing to its image-based structure, Instagram is perhaps the most 'aspirational' of all social media platforms," said Taylor Rains, managing partner of [Flugel Consulting](#), Charleston, SC. "People follow not only brands they currently interact with but also those with which they hope to one day."

Mr. Rains is not affiliated with Dorchester Collection, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Dorchester Collection was unable to comment by press deadline.

Just for the day

As part of its #DCMoments campaign, Dorchester Collection invited social media followers to travel via Instagram to Versailles to pick vegetables alongside the iconic château's gardener, Alain Baraton, and then wrap up the day at the Plaza Athénée's Restaurant Alain Ducasse.



Dorchester Collection Instagram post

The Instagram journey begins with an invitation to picnic at Versailles and then leads guests through the many phases of the day.

After having some drinks outside the Plaza Athénée, the party heads to the Jardin de la Reine at Versailles.



Jardin de la Reine at Versailles

Dorchester then displays a long table draped in an elegant, white table cloth that pops against the green garden where the picnic will take place.



Dorchester Collection Instagram post

Fans then follow Mr. Baraton as he collects various vegetables from the garden that will be used in the meal.



Dorchester Collection Instagram post of Versailles potatoes

The table is then set.



Dorchester Collection Instagram post

Finally, fresh, prepared vegetables and wine are enjoyed.



Dorchester Collection Instagram post

Each image is accompanied by a few details that build on the narrative. Interested consumers can follow the progress on Instagram or on [Storify](#).

Ultimately, the picnic journey fulfills multiple functions for Dorchester Collection.

First, it boosts engagement on its social pages by creating an immersive story. Next, it demonstrates that unexpected and enjoyable journeys can be found at its properties and in their surrounding areas, thus inspiring desire for travel.

Also, it showcases the brand's curatorial ability, especially in a culinary sense, as a way to differentiate from other properties. The brand's taste and standards mark each image, potentially elevating it above other brands.

In the future, Dorchester Collection can benefit from similarly curated Instagram field trips. The cumulative narrative is likely satisfying for followers working out the details of summer travel.

Likes to hikes

Dorchester Collection has leveraged Instagram to create solidarity and inspire travel before.

Hotel chain Dorchester Collection asked consumers to capture holiday magic for a seasonal Instagram contest.

Through Dec. 14, consumers submitted a photo to Instagram that captured the theme of #HolidayLights to enter to win one of five hampers of gifts from hotels across Dorchester Collection. Getting consumers to share photos beyond shots taken at its properties likely created more of a community surrounding the group during the holiday season ([see story](#)).

Between 2011 and 2014, nearly 3 million teens in the United States abandoned Facebook in favor of Instagram, further cementing the image-sharing platform as “the most important” social network, according to a report for L2.

Findings in L2’s “Intelligence Report: Instagram 2015” show Instagram to be the “moisturizer” of parent company Facebook that has allowed the latter social network to maintain relevance despite its dwindling “cool factor” and aging user base. With the introduction of sponsored content on Instagram, Facebook has leveraged data-sharing practices to connect consumers with brands and products, resulting in what L2 calls “the marketing world’s nuclear fusion” ([see story](#)).

While often derided for having weak return-on-investment, social media has the intangible but powerful effect of keeping brands top-of-mind.

"The Instagram 'journey' put together by Dorchester collection is a great way to captivate this aspirational audience," Mr. Rains said. "The campaign itself serves to increase the brand's prospective audience by allowing them a glimpse at what an on-property experience is really like.

"In addition to the aspirational audience, this Instagram 'journey' campaign also serves to highlight a unique offering to current brand loyalists that engage with it on social media," he said.

"Staying top-of-mind among your current market is a great way to generate interest among an audience that is most likely to convert, and possibly inspire travel."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/aZEKit5tDfo>

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