

IN-STORE

Four Seasons Austin shows Texas fight with Longhorns-themed initiative

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Four Seasons Hotel Austin

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts, Austin, TX, is showing its horns with a colorful array of University of Texas-themed offerings.

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In solidarity with the University of Texas college football team, which played its first game this past Saturday Sept. 5, the hotel will be providing guests with a number of ways to bring out guests' game-day spirits throughout the college football season. The Four Seasons is therefore showing its local spirit while also giving guests an experience that is loose, fun and personal rather than overly corporate or distant.

"As a member of the Austin community for almost 30 years, Four Seasons Austin has been a UT football fan through all of the highs and lows, but one thing remains the same: the loyal fans and the excitement throughout the city as football season returns," said Rob Hagelberg, general manager of **Four Seasons** Austin.

"We don't have a formal partnership with UT, but their success is our success – from both a financial and emotional standpoint – so we're always looking for ways to support the team," he said. "Taking good care of guests in town for the games and promoting team

spirit are just two of the small ways we can contribute."

Hook 'em horns

Among the displays of spirit will be floral displays in the lobby that match the team's burnt orange color and cocktails that share the team colors and boast names alluding to the team, such as "Bevo's Treat," named for the Longhorn's mascot. Staff will also show their local pride by wearing hats and lapel pins adorned with the team's logo.



University of Texas football

The hotel will host a pop-up shop that will sell team gear, provide face painting in the hours preceding kick-off (complimentary, but tips will be donated to the Seton Shivers Cancer Center) engage in tailgating with pom-poms, sno-cones and food trucks and even provide a drop-off shuttle to transport guests to the game.

For the more casual and stay-at-home fans, games will be televised in the lobby lounge and the hotel will host football pool and giveaway prizes to the winners. In a fitting track to build both team and brand loyalty, young fans will be given mini-footballs emblazoned with the Four Seasons logo.

Even those rooting against the home team will have something going for them, with custom welcome amenities personalized with team logos and colors.



Bleed Orange cocktail

The football spirit provides an opportunity for guests to connect with each other in a way that would normally be much more difficult. The experience of bonding with guests who have common interests may build loyalty among consumers, who will realize that their new friendships are the result of Four Seasons' creative undertakings.



Four Seasons Austin's Longhorn-themed welcome amenity

Four Seasons' display of local spirit and support for Austin's teams will also reinforce the

hotel as a player in the community, a brand excited by the same things as patrons and locals. Consumers expect a hotel to be a part of its locale and for employees to be knowledgeable about the community, and by showing guests how important local pride and sports are to Austin, Four Seasons is doing just that.

Texas fight

Other hotels have turned to sports in an effort to provide consumers with a more memorable experience.

For instance, the St. Regis Monarch Beach Resort in California is letting guests play like professional golfers with its “Fit Fore VIPs” offer.

Presented as perfect for either a men-only getaway or a retreat for golf aficionado couples, the package includes a personalized club fitting in the same facilities that PGA tour golfers visit. For golf fans, this package is likely to create memorable experiences that they will associate with the St. Regis ([see story](#)).

However, hotels are not the only members of the luxury industry to view sports as a way of connecting with and attracting consumers or of strengthening ties to cities.

Recently, German automaker Mercedes-Benz signed a naming rights agreement for the new Atlanta stadium scheduled to open in 2017.

As the naming partner, the stadium will be referred to as Mercedes-Benz Stadium until the contract is up for renewal in 2042. The high amount of visibility the stadium will receive between athletics and other entertainment events will keep Mercedes-Benz top of mind among local consumers and those tuning in during game time ([see story](#)).

"In everything we do, we try to provide guests with an authentic Austin experience," Mr. Hagelberg said. "This town practically bleeds burnt orange come September, so when guests join in the revelry and pride surrounding the games they automatically become part of that local camaraderie."

Final Take

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