

IN-STORE

St. Regis brings out heritage with jazz series

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St. Regis New York exterior

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Starwood Hotels' St. Regis New York is tapping into its musical history to better connect with guests during their stay.

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On Dec. 21, the hotel will host "Birdland Sessions at St. Regis New York," honoring jazz music of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Creative, experiential programming shows a hotel will go above and beyond to wow patrons and create a distinct and memorable experience.

"Music can evoke certain memories and emotions and call to a specific time in the past," said Hermann Elger, general manager of **St. Regis New York**. "A jazz partnership is a natural alignment for the St. Regis because the intimate performances will recall a time when the hotel welcomed some of the Jazz Era's most celebrated and respected musicians.

"It is through this collaboration that we are able to offer our guests the opportunity to enjoy remarkable talent while celebrating the flagship property's vibrant musical traditions," he said.

Jazz on a winter's day

The Dec. 21 event will feature a performance by singer Freddy Cole, brother of the late Nat King Cole. The former Mr. Cole, an accomplished performer in his own right, and an ensemble will pay tribute to Nat King Cole in a 90-minute set. Tickets can be purchased through Ticketfly for \$125.

"Both Birdland and The St. Regis New York have played host to the genre's greats and it is through this shared history that we have come together to pay homage to New York's jazz culture, both by honoring the legends of yesterday and embracing contemporary greats," Mr. Elger said in a statement. "We are thrilled to be working with Birdland to bring jazz back to the property and to celebrate our flagship hotel's rich musical tradition."



St. Regis New York ballroom roof

The Birdland Jazz Club was one of New York's most prominent jazz clubs in its first incarnations from 1949 to 1965, hosting performances by Charlie Parker, Harry Belafonte, Art Blakey, John Coltrane, Duke Ellington, Buddy Rich and many more, some of which have been immortalized on publicly available recordings. The club made a comeback in 1996 and still runs today.

St. Regis' event featuring Mr. Cole and his ensemble is the first in what will be an ongoing "Birdland Sessions," which will reinvigorate the hotel's own history of jazz music. The hotel's Vault space will be modified to look like the Birdland of yesteryear, heightening the experience for the audience.

The Birdland Sessions was prefigured by an event last year featuring jazz-pop singer-songwriter Jamie Cullum. For that event, the Vault space was remade into a jazz club from the 1920s.

"Last year's event with Jamie Cullum was a huge success," Mr. Elger said. "When we introduce an initiative that sees such an overwhelmingly positive response, it makes the decision about whether or not to continue an easy one.

"The hotel was buzzing during Jamie's performance, and we are excited keep spirits high and the energy alive with the performance by Freddy Cole, who will delight the crowd with his brother, Nat King Cole's, hits."



St. Regis New York King Cole bar

Reminding consumers of heritage often goes a long way in assuring them of a quality experience. Hosting a high-profile jazz event with the assistance of a renowned jazz club shows that St. Regis' past continues to create quality experiences for consumers.

Attendees will receive food and beverages at no additional charge, reinforcing the hotel's tradition of great service. Providing an exclusive, experience-oriented event with great service will help hotels stay relevant and desirable amid changing consumer behavior.

Out of the past

As of late, the hotel has been making efforts to put guests in touch with its heritage.

Late last month, St. Regis New York announced that it will let its bookish patrons peek into the building's past.

The library of John Jacob Astor IV has been encased in the same spot since 1904 on the second floor of the St. Regis Hotel, which the Astor family opened, and its contents will be made available to the property's guests on Thornwillow Press leather-bound Amazon Kindle readers. The offering simultaneously gives consumers a look into the hotel's history, the life of a historical figure and a way to pass the time ([see story](#)).

Other hotels have also looked to music to appeal to potential consumers.

Across the country, Four Seasons Hotel San Francisco is offering a package that will liven up vacations.

The hotel has partnered with the renowned San Francisco Symphony Orchestra to offer a VIP Symphony Luxe package. Offering arts-based experiences helps Four Seasons become more than "just" a hotel to its patrons ([see story](#)).

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Final Take

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