

INTERNET

Dorchester Collection lets consumers open presents early on festive microsite

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Dorchester Collection Le Richemond, Geneva

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Hotelier Dorchester Collection is promising presents under the tree to entice consumers to book for the holiday season and beyond.

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The brand has launched a festive microsite that lets consumers explore its collection and provides chances to win prizes. The social component of the Web site will keep Dorchester Collection in contact with prospective guests and win new consumers drawn by the allure of giveaways.

"Using a holiday microsite makes the visitor feel the offerings are more exclusive and appropriate for the holiday season," said Andrea Wilson, vice president, strategy director and luxury practice lead at [iProspect](#). "Microsites with a holiday theme like Dorchester Collection's Festive World gives the visitor an experience that feels more fun, festive and whimsical than a standard website experience."

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

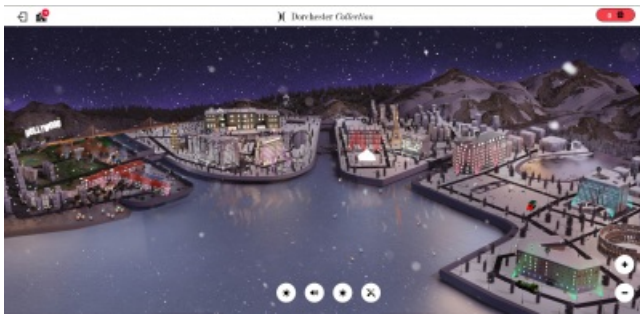
Dorchester was unable to comment by press deadline.

A Dorchester Collection Christmas

To enter the site, users must first provide an email and mailing address, meaning that Dorchester Collection can maintain relationships with any consumers who may be unfamiliar with the hotelier but are driven to the site by friends or a chance to win prizes.

"By inhibiting microsite entry unless contact information is shared, there is a strong chance the roadblock will alienate and turn away some visitors," Ms. Wilson said. "However, those that entered their information are more qualified and interested in a brand relationship, as they are taking the time to enter and are willing to share their information. This makes those that enter the microsite more valuable to the Dorchester Collection because of their clear interest, and the creation of multiple opportunities to start/build a relationship through email, physical address and digital touchpoints."

Once inside, users are treated to an animated overview of the Dorchester Collection, spanning Hollywood, CA to Milan in the width of a computer screen. Hotels in Los Angeles; Beverly Hills, CA; London; Ascot, England; Paris; Geneva; Milan and Rome are depicted, and people are seen skiing.

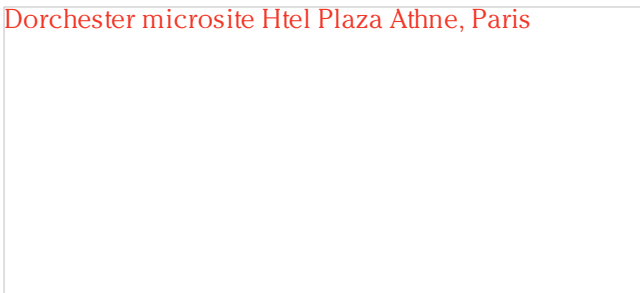


Dorchester Collection microsite, winter, night

At the bottom of the screen, users can turn on and off the sound and animation, toggle between winter and summer or day and night. At the top right is a "Christmas countdown" showing the days, hours, minutes and seconds until the holiday.

Above each hotel location is a bubble with an "i" inside. Clicking it gives the user an option to "Enter the Hotel" and gives a small description of a holiday promotion that location offers. Upon entering, the user is shown the lobby of that hotel, which contains a variety of festive decorations and glowing presents.

Dorchester microsite Htel Plaza Athne, Paris



Dorchester Collection microsite Htel Plaza Athne, Paris

Once a day, the user can open one present across all the hotels for a chance to win a prize. To extend the reach of the promotion, however, users can invite friends via email, Twitter or Facebook, and each one who joins gives the person who sent the invitation another chance to win a prize.

The exploratory nature of the microsite and the detail-heavy design gives the promotion an interactive and almost game-like feel, which will likely help prompt users to email friends with another chance to win. The chance of winning prizes simply for providing an email and mailing address makes it more likely to go viral.



Dorchester Collection 45 Park Lane, London

While those who do win prizes could become loyalists, those who get excited about a potential vacation and do not win still have an option to book a room from the microsite. This organic discovery often leads to a higher percentage of conversions than more overtly pushing products or promotions to the consumer.

Dorchester Collection's microsite can be explored [here](#).

Golden tickets

Dorchester Collection is not the only hotelier to build a microsite for users to explore with the hopes of holiday sales

conversions.

The Peninsula Hotels is similarly offering its patrons the "Golden Ticket" to holiday cheer.

The hotel chain has expanded on its SnowPage promotion with a festive microsite that includes a list of holiday offers and other festive activities in each hotel, as well as a behind-the-scenes video. The interactivity and design of the site will strengthen the bond with consumers and position a holiday stay at a Peninsula hotel as a memorable experience ([see story](#)).

Previous Dorchester Collection efforts have also sought to capitalize on viral attention.

For last year's holiday campaign, Dorchester Collection asked consumers to capture holiday magic for a seasonal Instagram contest.

From mid-November through Dec. 14, consumers could submit 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](#)).

"It's extremely important for Dorchester Collection and other luxury hoteliers to showcase during the holiday for two main reasons," Ms. Wilson said. "First, the holidays are a busy travel time period; secondly, consumers, even those beyond affluents, are preferring experiences over material goods. Dorchester Collection has the opportunity to capitalize on these trends by helping visitors booking last minute holiday travel or giving a travel experience as a gift.

"The toggle ability to move from winter to summer and day to night makes the tool more interactive and fun, and can also inspire visitors to think about travel beyond the current winter timeframe," she said.

Final Take

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