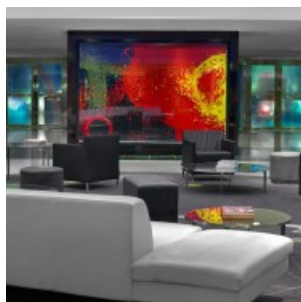


IN-STORE

Le Meridien targets kids to bring in families

December 14, 2015



Le Meridien Paris lobby

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Starwood Hotels & Resorts' Le Meridien is reimagining play time to "redefine the future of family travel."

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The brand has begun to roll out a number of kid-friendly initiatives across global locations that will connect children to culture, art and design. With family and multigenerational travel on the rise, hotels will need to implement far-ranging initiatives to ensure that the grandchildren, the grandparents and those in between are all satisfied.

Kids and toys

Le Meridien is launching a number of family programs that are designed specifically to cater to the traveling habits and desires of large, multigenerational families. Its programs are filtered through the brand's "Filters of Discovery": Coordinates, Culture and Cuisine.

Accordingly, the Le Meridien Family Kids Club is inspired by mid-century modernism and is adorned with artwork to stimulate young minds. The seating and style of the Kids Club will play off Le Meridien's lobbies, inspired by coffeehouses and travel, imparting the brand values of design and culture.



Le Meridien family

"From big to small, our guests are creative and curious-minded travelers, and the design and programming at Le Meridien Family Kids Clubs allows for children to express their creativity in unexpected ways and learn about the destination they are visiting," said Julie Frank, global director of design, Le Meridien Hotels & Resorts.

Each hotel is designed with reference to that location's specific landmarks. The clubs will contain local musical instruments and "artful yet playful games and toys."

Le Meridien will also be leveraging its partnership, announced earlier this year, with LEGO group. Children 12 and under staying at any Le Meridien hotel will be given LEGO toys at the start of their stay and will be able to keep them

when returning home.



Le Meridien New York rooftop view

Besides the joys of the various programs aimed at children will offer during the vacation, providing kids with a popular toy will create associations between Le Meridien and fun, creativity and design.

Other initiatives, such as Le Meridien Family, target travelers of all ages to offer a shared bonding experience. Le Meridien Ra Beach Hotel & Resort in Barcelona, for example, offers bicycle tours and photography lessons, as well as exclusive access to local art partners, for entire families.

As multigenerational travel becomes more popular, such initiatives that offer the whole family a unified experience may be particularly important to travelers.

To further entice consumers, as part of a global family package, children eat free and gain complimentary access to kid-targeted programs, and a second or adjoining room is discounted.

"Le Meridien Family: Discover Together"

Le Meridien has also launched a [Web site](#) to showoff its campaign. Included on the site is a video that provides a closer look at the Kids Clubs and the experience of family travel to help win over the uninitiated.

The next generation

The hospitality industry is undergoing a number of shifts as a result of generational changes.

For example, traveling is an increasingly popular way for people to give back, and hotel brands must stay on top of the trend to maintain their status as the best in the business.

A recent study by Tours.com found that an astonishing 55 percent of America-based travelers partook in volunteer work during a vacation within the past two years, with almost three quarters calling their charitable donations or philanthropic endeavors "important," "very important" or "extremely important." As "voluntourism" becomes increasingly common, brands must show that they care equally and assist travelers in partaking in volunteer work or gifting to maintain status and image ([see story](#)).

Starwood brands also look to appeal to consumers on the basis of sustainable practices.

The conglomerate has recently revealed a guide that will help guarantee that guests make responsible dining choices.

Alongside New England Aquarium, Starwood has created a poster, guide and other materials that will help with the selection of sustainable and local seafood. Numerous seafood species are threatened or endangered, and taking an active stance on the issue is in line with Starwood's repeated initiatives to position itself as an environmental leader ([see story](#)).

Final Take

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