

MOBILE

## Luxury Collection gets social with Beautiful Destinations campaign

December 17, 2015



*The Garden Court at Place Hotel, a Luxury Collection hotel, San Francisco*

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Starwood Hotels & Resorts' The Luxury Collection is adapting a social-first approach to invigorate its new brand identity.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

The hospitality brand will partner with Instagram influencer Beautiful Destinations to grow its social presence and create new content. Consumers expect a hotel's great service to extend beyond a stay, and that partly means a visible presence online between visits.

"Beautiful Destinations does an incredible job of capturing memorable travel experiences, and as our brand focuses on experiential luxury, we found Beautiful Destinations to be the perfect partner to bring to life the authentic, indigenous experiences found in our hotels and destinations around the world," said Hoyt H. Harper II, global brand leader for **The Luxury Collection**. "As we are seeing more and more people specifically turning to Instagram for travel experiences, we have partnered with Beautiful Destinations to tell our story in an amplified way and gain followers.

### Social first

According to The Luxury Collection, **Beautiful Destinations** is the largest travel influencer on Instagram, with more than 4.8 million followers. It uses data and analytics, influencer marketing and content creation services to help grow its partners' social media followings and engagement.

"Social media has become increasingly vital for the marketing of hotels, and the hotels that accept this and become proactive with their social media promotions continue to stay ahead of the curve," said Damon M. Banks, media consultant and editor at **LuxeGetaways**. "As I often hear, it's difficult for any brand to accurately determine their ROI from social media efforts, but even without these precise numbers, there's no denying that social media needs to be a primary part of the marketing strategy for hotels."

The partnership will expose the hotel brand to the 8 million or more travelers who follow the influencer and those in its portfolio. It will last one year and is being billed as the first partnership a luxury hotel brand has entered into for a strategic social media campaign.



*Vana Belle, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Koh Samui, Thailand; photo by Beautiful Destinations*

"The Luxury Collection has helped our guests create Instagrammable moments long before the app existed, and we've found that many of our guests believe that a memorable experience isn't complete until they have shared it with someone," Mr. Harper II said. "Instagram is the perfect channel for sharing the memories they create in our destinations.

"Word-of-mouth is the number one travel motivator, and as an authority on experiential luxury travel, our brand aims to share its extraordinary stories widely and engage with a larger audience on social media."



*Excelsior Hotel Gallia, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Milan*

Accordingly, Beautiful Destinations will equip The Luxury Collection hotels to adapt a "Social First" mindset that empowers both guests and employees to make use of social media to tell The Luxury Collection hotels' heritage stories.

"Social First means that Social media is the genesis of advertising content," Jeremy Jauncey said. "Social media is a two way street, whereas traditional advertising is a one way conversation.

"Starting with social means starting with a conversation where the consumer is an active participant," he said.

"Starting with social means being able to react and adapt in real time, based on actual data."

"Social First means that content is living and breathing in the world. It's sharable, it can be measured and quantified in ways that traditional media cannot be."

Each Luxury Collection hotel is tied closely to its locale and has its own story, which the Social First approach will bring out, ideally turning the hotels into "Destination Authorities," a claim recalling the brand's concurrent "Hotels that Define the Destination" advertising campaign.



*Augustine, a Luxury Collection hotel, Prague; photo by Beautiful Destinations*

"Destination Authority' refers to the fact that our hotels are true representations of their destinations, offering unique, authentic experiences that evoke lasting, treasured memories," Mr. Harper II said. "Led by our incredible Luxury Collection concierges, our associates help our guests personalize their stays to make them truly memorable."

New and improved

The new approach to marketing is one in a larger array of changes for The Luxury Collection.

In September, The Luxury Collection is launching a new brand identity, complete with a global advertising campaign, to smooth the transition for consumers.

"Hotels that Define the Destination" is the brand's first global ad campaign since 2011 and will showcase the hotel chain's new logo and highlight elements of experiential travel. As travelers take advantage of the Internet and other resources to plan trips well ahead of time, hotels must ensure that they can offer more than a bed to sleep in to foster loyalty, and a new brand identity will allow Luxury Collection to define itself through those additional experiences ([see story](#)).

Other luxury hotels have also realized the significance Instagram now has on travelers and have found their own ways to make use of the platform.

For example, in October Four Seasons Hotel and Resorts began keeping things in focus with its new visual education series.

"Focus on Four Seasons" will offer tips to take the perfect photograph and curate the best images captured at Four Seasons hotels by professional photographers and the average Instagramming consumer alike. Meeting consumers on a platform they enjoy in a rewarding fashion helps keeps a brand visible and attractive to consumers ([see story](#)).

"Our refreshed social identity is the second phase of our brand identity overhaul. We like to see our guests as storytellers, collectors and explorers, and our social media strategy in collaboration with Beautiful Destinations supports our recently revealed ad campaign," Mr. Harper II said. "We fully recognize the enormous untapped potential of The Luxury Collection, and with this new social media partnership, advertising campaign, and brand identity, we are shining an ever brighter spotlight on The Luxury Collection as it becomes the world's largest luxury hotel brand by year's end."

Final Take

*Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*