

IN-STORE

Mandarin Oriental goes the distance for health-conscious patrons

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Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

The Mandarin Oriental in Barcelona, Spain is making itself the hotel of choice for distance runners with two new promotions.

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The Barcelona Marathon, held this year on March 16, attracted nearly 20,000 runners last year. With two packages aimed specifically to assist the marathon runner, Mandarin Oriental has found a creative and unique way to take advantage of the recent trend of incorporating fitness and health into travel.

"We want to be innovative, give an added value to our guests, and a holistic experience," said Mnica Homedes, director of communications at **Mandarin Oriental**, Barcelona. "Within this package, guest will be able to discover the city in a different way, will be able to practice sport and will be able to practice wellness and fitness with a unique sense of place.

"We want to facilitate the wellness way of life and give them the best recommendations and offer them the best options," she said.

Run if you want to

Hotels are regularly looking for ways to make themselves a part of a traveler's fitness and health initiatives. Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona's "Marathon Package" and "Get Ready for the Marathon Programme" will make them stand out among other hotels for runners traveling to the event.

The Marathon Package, valid from March 10-15, includes three nights accommodation for two. Patrons will have a daily breakfast, either in-room or at the hotel's BistrEau restaurant, and will be greeted with a VIP Marathon Pack consisting of a personalized running t-shirt and the marathon race number.



Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona room

Patrons will also work with a personal coach to assist with stretching and will get to preview the final three miles of the course on the day before the marathon. Rounding out the package are two spa treatments and late checkout.

For an extra \$2,000 per person, marathon entrants can indulge in the Get Ready for the Marathon Program, a five-day training plan designed by the spa in collaboration with Ergodinmica Clinica, a Spanish sports medicine clinic.

Consumers will receive an hour-long session for each strength and stretching and another hour with a personal running test. In addition, a lactate test, a gas stress test to study the body's reaction to distance running, a biomechanical analysis and a functional evaluation and strength study are included.

The Get Ready for the Marathon Programme accommodates one, must be booked a week in advance and does not include a room.



Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona spa

Marathons are growing in popularity and are appealing to people far outside the city and even country where they take place. Subsequently, many affluent fitness aficionados have begun to plan vacations around marathon dates, presenting an opportunity for hotels in the process.

Consumers are swamped with options when traveling, and Airbnb and TripAdvisor have only further democratized the field. By offering something exclusive and that nobody else can, Mandarin Oriental is incentivizing consumers to choose it and also showing the extent to which health and fitness align with its brand values.

"We want to bring wellness not only in the Spa, but in every aspect of the hotel guest's experience, and we follow a #WellnessEverywhere ideology in all the hotels," Ms. Homedes said. "Mandarin Oriental, Barcelona is a wellness destination for its Spa and wellness philosophy for beauty and healthy proposals as well as follower of the latest trends."

Ahead of the pack

Early promotions across the industry indicate that the sector is aware that it needs to appeal to health-conscious consumers.

Hotels are ringing in the new year with offers targeted at health and fitness resolutions and building repeat

consumers.

The desire to be healthier is particularly prominent when the calendar turns and people see a symbolic chance to start anew, and a number of hotels are capitalizing on the trend with spa and wellness offerings. Regardless of whether or not consumers keep their resolutions, getting them in the spa for the first time could lead to repeat business ([see story](#)).

Besides Mandarin Oriental, other hotels are also devising creative ways to address a patrons' fitness goals in an effective and unique manner.

Since November 2014, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts has taken guests on jogs, walks or hikes through the surrounding areas of hotels as part of its brand-wide "Energy by Four Seasons" effort.

When staying at a hotel, for business or pleasure, working in time for fitness and exercise can impede sightseeing or professional engagements. Known for its penchant for healthy living, Four Seasons has devised a way for guests to achieve both through its sightseeing and fitness "on the run" tours found at a number of properties ([see story](#)).

"We want to delight our guest with unique experiences, creating distinctive concepts and propose a fitness and health offer that goes beyond offering massages or treatments," Ms. Homedes said. "We want to offer them unique experiences that will go beyond their needs and expectations."

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