

IN-STORE

Mandarin Oriental Bangkok pushes culture, CSR for 140th anniversary

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Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

The Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok is taking guests on a trip through time to celebrate 140 years.

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The hotel will host a number of culinary, music and dance events, exhibitions and CSR initiatives throughout the year, emphasizing the hotel's ties to various historical periods and figures. Turning a hotel into a destination will attract visitors and also positions the Mandarin Oriental as a culturally rich and creative brand.

"Not many hotels can boast such a storied history as the Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok," said said Tiffany Dowd, founder of Luxe Social Media and **Luxe Tiffany**. "This remarkable anniversary is the perfect opportunity to highlight the hotel's exceptional history and exciting new renovation.

"By celebrating with local events, it further strengthens ties to the city and region while continuing to maintain a strong global brand image," she said. "International guests do not have to compromise luxury and service to have an authentic cultural experience."

Ms. Dowd is not affiliated with Mandarin Oriental, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Mandarin Oriental could not comment by press deadline.

Celebrate your life

The hotel, then known as The Oriental, was built in 1876 and was the Kingdom of Siam's first luxury hotel. It hosted everyone from historical figures, including Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, who oversaw the collapse of the Russian empire, to artists, including "Heart of Darkness" author Joseph Conrad.

Each of the hotel's restaurants, Le Normandie and Lord Jim's, will host both a two-star and a three-star Michelin Chef. Le Normandie will host Alain Solivrs July 4-9 and Sbastian Bras Dec. 12-17, while Lord Jim's will welcome Jos Avillez May 24-28 and Diego Oka June 23-26.



Mandarin Oriental Bangkok's Le Normandie

In addition, wine critic and journalist Jancis Robinson will conduct a wine tasting in the hotel's Royal Ballroom on March 21, which will feature wines from around the world and cheese tasting with famed affineur Hugues de Kerdel. For Russia Day, the Embassy of the Russia Federation will provide a caviar and vodka dinner.

Beyond the culinary, an Italian jazz series featuring Danilo Rea and the Guidi Trio, among others, will begin in March, with events to take place throughout the year. On May 30, a group of Italian opera singers accompanied by the Bangkok Symphony Orchestra will perform in the Royal Ballroom.

For those who prefer the fine arts, an exhibition of Thai contemporary artists will be on display until the end of May, while dresses of Queen Sirikit of Thailand, the world's longest-serving consort of a monarch, will show later in the year.



Mandarin Oriental Royal Ballroom

Holding a variety of culinary and arts events taking place throughout the year will appeal to a range of travelers, who will see that the hotel is regularly providing access to experiences that would not be available otherwise. Having these events spaced throughout the year demonstrates the Mandarin Oriental's commitment to making every visit a memorable one.

In addition to the cultural events and exhibitions, the hotel will also pay tribute to Ankana Kalantananda, whose tenure with the company since 1947 makes her the hotel's longest serving employee. Throughout the year, Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok will also work on a number of CSR initiatives, highlighted by the contribution of 14,000 of work for Giving Back to Bangkok and a fundraiser targeting 6 million Baht, or \$171,000.



Mandarin Oriental Bangkok lobby

While many of the events are aimed at visitors, including CSR and fundraising initiatives and honoring employees demonstrates the brand's awareness of those who help make it what it is. Younger consumers are particularly attentive to a brand's values, so goodwill efforts will likely resonate with consumers and reverberate positively across all the brand's properties.

New trends

Celebrating an anniversary of a property, particularly a landmark one, is becoming increasingly popular.

For example, The Savoy, Fairmont in London kept consumers excited for its 125th anniversary Aug. 6 with a month-long social media campaign.

For the 30 days leading up to the anniversary, the property gave away brand experiences or prizes pertaining to the surrounding area. Although 30 days is a long time to expect consumers to stay engaged, The Savoy only needed a particular consumer to interact for a day for the seed of the anniversary date to be planted ([see story](#)).

Additionally, Mandarin Oriental properties often find ways to showcase art within their walls.

Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong is attracting new guests by keeping its ties to the art world strong via a partnership with Art Basel.

This will be the fourth year that the property is the official hotel partner for the Art Basel show in Hong Kong, a track record that authenticates the hotelier's interest in and ties to art. The partnership, along with the hotel's themed promotions, will help it reel in a cultured and influential audience that all luxury brands covet ([see story](#)).

"A stay at any Mandarin Oriental hotel goes beyond just booking a room," Ms. Dowd said. "Today's well-traveled and discerning traveler is looking for unique experiences and these bespoke events by The Mandarin Oriental, Bangkok are a wonderful and inspired way to celebrate such an important landmark."