

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Le Mridien unites properties with French Riviera-themed parties

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Le Meridien Saigon entrance

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Starwood Hotels & Resorts' Le Mridien is marking the change of seasons with a brand-wide series of Summer Soires.

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Summer Soires is a global series of events that brings together celebrations of the summer with the brand's French heritage via music, nightlife and games. For consumers, the summer is a time to get away, and promises of transporting events suggest an ideal atmosphere to relax and enjoy the summer with friends and family.

"Summer Soires pay homage to our brand's French roots and provide an opportunity for both guests and locals to unlock their destination through cuisine, culture and music inspired by France," said Pablo Henderson, director of brand management, **Le Mridien Hotels & Resorts**. "The signature offerings of our brand center around the coordinates of our destinations, the culture of the local area and creative cuisine, and these events touch upon all of these brand values."

Champagne and petanque

The soires aim to take travelers from across the brand's properties to the Cte d'Azur, France. The events will include Champagne, playlists from French bossa nova collective and Le Mridien global music partner Nouvelle Vague and a variation on the game of Ptanque, in which players attempt to throw hollow metallic balls as close as possible to a smaller "jack," or target ball.



Le Meridien Ptanque

Events will occur nightly, weekly or during particularly celebratory instances depending on the property. Le Mridien Saigon, Vietnam and Le Mridien Beach Plaza, Monte Carlo, Monaco both occur weekly, while the Piccadilly property will celebrate every night.

Each location also offers its own variation on the party.

For example, the Piccadilly in London takes inspiration from the 1970s Riviera and actress Brigitte Bardot. Eric Brujan, executive chef from Le Mridien Nice, France will offer a small plates and cocktail menu.

In Palm Springs, CA, a "Pastia and Ptanque at the Parker" package will give guests a complimentary room upgrade, a round of cocktails for two and breakfast.

The Monaco property will highlight Ptanque, offering guests the chance to play with and learn from a professional player.

With kids on summer vacation and much of the northern hemisphere experiencing nicer weather, hotels tend to push summer-themed events to lure families and professionals anxious to get away.

At the same time, the scheduling of the events makes them ideal for locals looking for an evening night out as well. Catering to locals can create favorable impressions on guests who may not have otherwise considered the brand when they decided to vacation.

For both groups, the focus on the brand's French heritage will convey characteristics and ideas that removes anonymity and helps the brand to stand out in an always-crowded hospitality sector. Brands with a story and discernible personality tend to make greater impressions on consumers.

"Le Mridien Presents Summer Soires"

A brief video, as well as now-compulsory social media promotion, will help raise awareness for the events.

Summer escape

Le Mridien has also made a push to spur family travel by targeting kids.

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

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 ([see story](#)).

The two programs in conjunction could make Le Mridien hotels especially attractive to families looking for a summer destination.

Competing hotels are taking similar approaches as they target summer travelers.

For example, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts' Rome Cavalieri hotel is spurring family travel by promising the youngest guests extra attention.

For its IT Club League of Young Cavaliers, the hotel has lined up a series of activities and experiences for kids, ranging from magic shows and video games to language immersion. Hotels are making themselves kid-friendly to

maintain an edge with family and multi-generational travelers ([see story](#)).

"We do see a spike in family travel within North America during summer months, and our Summer Soire program can certainly cater to that audience: welcoming family teams on Ptanque courts and offering a great way for children to learn about this classic French pastime," Mr. Henderson said.

"Globally, the series of events caters to a broader audience of guests and locals," he said. "Our aim was to create a lighthearted, yet chic, way to celebrate the brand's French heritage and bring our food and beverage programs to life."

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