

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Le Collectionist funds support its worldwide growth

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Le Collectionist's online platform. Image credit: Le Collectionist

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

French luxury rental startup Le Collectionist has received significant funding to start a global takeover, possibly strong enough to combat Airbnb's steps into the high-end.

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Artemis Group's Red River West has led an investment into Le Collectionist, with the travel platform receiving \$10 million in funding. The rental portal plans to expand around the world with 100 more offices, and hopes to target travelers from the United States coming to Europe.

"It's essential for us to have a physical and local presence to ensure the satisfaction of our customers, and this new round of funding means that we are able to invest heavily in opening 100 local offices around the world by 2020," said Max Aniort, executive director and co-founder of **Le Collectionist**, Paris. "We will be able to focus on the international expansion and development of the company and accelerate our establishment in the U.S. to attract Americans to Europe and open destinations over there.

"Additionally, our acquisition of Ibizan villa specialists Bonder & Co will allow us to significantly strengthen our local presence in Ibiza, Formentera and Barcelona and establish Le Collectionist as the European leader in luxury private rentals," he said.

"It is unique because it is the first investment of Red River West, an investment fund within Artemis, Mr. Pinault's family holding. They have a history with luxury brands and it is therefore a recognition of Le Collectionist's standards."

High-end rental

Le Collectionist is an online portal similar to Airbnb in which users can search for properties in a seamless, personalized and intelligent manner. However, this platform looks to provide exceptional experience with the top high-end properties.

A \$10 million investment means the travel brand will establish a presence in various cities all over the world. Le Collectionist plans to be the leading high-end rental service in Europe by opening 100 new offices worldwide before

2020.



Chalet Ruisseau De La Renarde Meribel available for rent on Le Collectionist. Image credit: Le Collectionist

The rental service also has plans invest more in attracting Americans who are interested in traveling to Europe.

Le Collectionist is currently cornering the Ibiza market by acquiring Ibizan villa specialist Bonder & Co.

Artemis, which is backing the \$10 million investment, is luxury goods conglomerate Kering's investment firm. This means Le Collectionist will become more established as a luxury brand and further intertwined with the luxury world.



Villa Holia available for rent on Le Collectionist. Image credit: Le Collectionist

Artemis also recently took a minority stake in Italian designer Giambattista Valli's brand.

In 2004, Mr. Valli opened Maison Valli in Paris, offering haute couture as well as the Giambattista Valli and Giamba ready-to-wear lines. Mr. Valli's designs are popular with celebrities including Penelope Cruz, Natalie Portman, Halle Berry and Salma Hayek, who just happens to be married to Francois-Henri Pinault, Kering's chairman and CEO ([see more](#)).

Airbnb competition

To compete with the growing strategy of Airbnb, the luxury rental platform will be working on its personalized recommendation platform to continue to better suit the needs of its users and provide accurate and intelligent recommendations.

Digital home rental platform Airbnb also has been causing greater disruption in the luxury travel and hospitality space with an addition of a high-end tier.

Tentatively named Airbnb Lux, the new tier will be a hub for users looking for luxury home rentals such as mansions and penthouses. The high-end classification will be one of many new tiers from Airbnb that will help users search more easily for what type of accommodation they would like to book ([see more](#)).

"There are many solutions when a traveler wants to rent a property: Web sites, local agents, hotels' private properties to name a few. Le Collectionist is the only player to propose an amazing holiday experience in more than 100

destinations," Le Collectionist's Mr. Aniort said. "Our model has three pillars: a brand based on an unforgettable customer experience, a scalable local presence that allows us to source extraordinary properties and a tech platform that drives our business by automating data collection and, in the near future, that matches destinations.

"The market for luxury property rentals is estimated to be between \$25 and \$30 billion per year," he said. "While we don't have any direct competitors, One Fine Stay + Luxury Retreats come the closest to our model; even still, these two firms account for a small fraction of the market.

"The rest is fragmented between local agents who are focused on one destination and, therefore, have trouble-serving clients who want to travel elsewhere. Le Collectionist aims to fill that need while maintaining a white glove level of service."

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