

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Departures unveils minimalist redesign for March/April issue

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The publication's new design is focused on a clean, minimal design and a flexible framework. Image credit: Departures

By DANNY PARISI

Print magazine Departures is getting a hefty new redesign for its March/April issue courtesy of new editor in chief Jeffries Blackerby.

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Departures' new look features more white space, a cleaner format and a refinement of the different sections of the magazine. The move comes just after Departures' parent company Time, Inc. was purchased by Meredith.

"Being the new editor in chief, I naturally wanted put my stamp on Departures," Mr. Blackerby said. "And specifically with the print magazine, I wanted to capitalize on its unique storytelling power.

"The magazine is published exclusively for American Express Platinum and Centurion cardmembers, so I wanted the print experience to be special and to deliver something unique," he said. "It also needs to offer our audience something distinct from what we give them via Departures.com and our social channels.

"I wanted to play up print's ability to create a seamless and immersive environment that invites readers to linger over a great read or an amazing picture run in full-bleed. This is particularly important for the subjects we cover—fashion, travel, design, culture—because those kinds of stories come to life so beautifully at the pace and scale of print."

Print redesign

When Mr. Blackerby took over Departures in May, he knew that the magazine needed a refresh, something that would align it more with its reader's expectations for what a luxury magazine should look and read like.

Starting with the March/April issue, Departures will have a new design focused on clearly delineating the distinct sections of the publication while maintain a consistent aesthetic across the entire magazine.

Recognizing that the modern luxury consumer is attracted to things that are clean and elegant rather than busy and cluttered, the publication's new look features a pared-back aesthetic with more attention paid to layout and white space.

"To create this kind of enveloping experience, I worked with our creative director, Paul Martinez, on a visual design

that probably has more in common with branding than magazine design of the past," Mr. Blackerby said. "It's simple and pared back, without a lot of visual devices, and it's very easy to navigate.

"Because of our wide content range, it was important to create distinct sections that still had a unified feel," he said. "The subtle use of color creates consistency from story to story and section to section.

"It's a fairly systematic approach, but one that's meant to appear effortless. I didn't want a jumbly, hyperkinetic feel because I don't think that's what telegraphs luxury in print at this moment."



Departures' editor-in-chief Jeffries Blackerby. Image credit: Departures

Mr. Blackerby is also hoping that the redesign will prove flexible enough to account for all sorts of experimentation and unique design layouts in the future.

"We've also created a malleable framework, not a static one, that allows us to interject different ideas and templates and try new things," he said. "Magazines are always evolving."

Fresh coat of paint

Departures' redesign comes just after Meredith completed its acquisition of Time, Inc.

With Meredith's acquisition, it gained a new base of luxury-consuming readers.

By acquiring Time Inc., along with its luxury publications such as Country Homes & Interiors and Travel + Leisure, Meredith has significantly expanded its reach to luxury consumers and the advertisers who want to reach them ([see story](#)).



Departures' March/April issue. Image credit: Departures

Departures has seized on the opportunity provided by the change in ownership as a chance to reinvent its visual identity at a time when the media industry, and print magazines in particular, are in flux.

"All print magazines are going through a degree of soul searching right now what do our audiences really want from us?" Mr. Blackerby said. "Luxury magazines have a certain advantage because of what a tactile and concentrated experience reading a magazine is.

"At their best, print magazines command a kind of attention and time spent that make them luxury products in themselves," he said. "How we are seeing luxury magazines evolve is that they are becoming the kind of visceral, tactile object you must hold in your hands and that's certainly my goal at Departures."

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