

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Partnerships offer room for experimental growth in luxury

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The Aviary NY in the Mandarin Oriental. Image credit: Mandarin Oriental

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

NEW YORK – Collaborations can be a unique avenue for luxury brands to experiment in experiential spaces in the hopes to stay competitive, especially in the food and beverage space.

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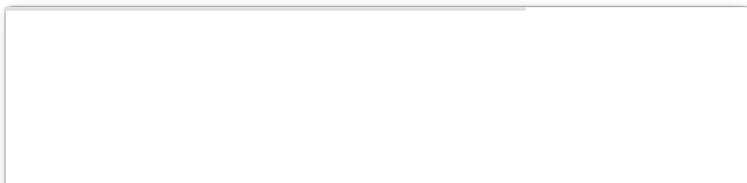
Mandarin Oriental New York is one luxury brand who is weathering the competitive storm in its hometown by looking to innovate in the experiential dining space. During a panel at Luxury Interactive on Oct. 16, the director of communications for Mandarin Oriental New York detailed how the brand partnered with a cult-favorite Chicago restaurant that previously had no experience in New York for a food and beverage experience that blended two different audiences.

"It was really interesting way to blend two different concepts and two pedigrees of brands and bring them together in a way that also brought together a very interesting mix of audience," said Lisa Caruso, director of communications at Mandarin Oriental New York. "Their audience was now coming to our hotel, many people who had never been there before."

Experimentation for experience

The Aviary NY, located in the Mandarin Oriental property in New York, was established after executives at the hotel started to notice an upward trend in food and beverage experimentation. Ms. Caruso believed that there was a unique opportunity here and worked with chef Grant Achatz and Nick Kokonas, who had a cult following in Chicago, to open a new concept restaurant.

The space has attracted a wide-ranging audience, bringing in a group of diners who likely had never been to the Mandarin Oriental before.



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Book your holiday parties and events at The Aviary NYC featuring caviar hors d'oeuvres and other bite-sized specialties. View link in bio. #TheAviaryNYC #MOfoodies @grant_achatz @dan_perretta @michaeldengelegi @TheAlineaGroup Photo Credit: @danielkrieger

A post shared by Mandarin Oriental, New York (@mo_newyork..

Mandarin Oriental's partnership story is just one example of how partnerships can help luxury brands experiment to innovate in the customer experience.

Another speaker on the panel, ABC Carpet & Home's head of ecommerce Scott Steever, explained a similar story in which the retailer attempted to start a bridal registry program, but its user experience was lacking.

Instead, ABC partnered with third-party bridal registry service Zola to capture this segment.

The partnership was mutually beneficial, as ABC is a well-known brand in New York that skews to an older crowd and Zola caters to the young bridal community.

Through this partnership, ABC was able to target young brides at the beginning of their nuptial journey. This means the company has the opportunity to stay with them throughout the big moments in their life, essentially furnishing their lives from then on out.

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'i could say things with colors and shapes that i couldn't say any other way' -georgia o'keefe 📷 @canwetalkaboutthis

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The idea was born from the concept of attempting to help customers and add something to their experience.

Partnerships are a significant part of the luxury world, with a range in options from limited-edition products to added retail capabilities.

Partnerships and luxury

Collaborations can allow luxury brands to gain prime placement or enter a new industry.

For instance, after beauty manufacturer L'Oréal acquired augmented reality makeup app ModiFace, it entered an agreement with Facebook that will create AR experiences through the application's camera feature.

ModiFace technology has been seamlessly integrated with Facebook, allowing brands from L'Oréal direct access to consumers for makeup testing. Brands such as Lancôme, Giorgio Armani and Yves Saint Laurent will allow users to try on different makeup looks virtually from their inventory of products ([see story](#)).

U.S. fashion label John Varvatos similarly took its focus on culture to the screen as it joins forces with a production company for film and television content.

Through a joint venture with Network Entertainment Group, John Varvatos will collaborate on original content about fashion, music and pop culture. After launching a record label and producing concerts, this marks a further move into arts and entertainment for the brand ([see story](#)).

"It has been extremely successful for us," said Scott Steever, head of ecommerce at ABC Carpet and Home. "Getting into the bridal space with Zola as a partner has really helped us capture that younger consumer.

"Really getting into that space when these consumers are first starting and hopefully we'll be able to move them along through their life stages and hopefully we can furnish their homes."

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