

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Luxury travelers value hotels as trip partners: Fairmont

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Fairmont Scottsdale offers guests many opportunities for relaxation. Image credit: Fairmont

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Affluents continue to see hotels as authority figures when looking for authentic travel experiences, according to a new report from Fairmont Hotels & Resorts.

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Fairmont's 2018 Global Luxury Traveler Insights Study found that more than half of luxury travelers are attracted to destinations based on their hotel options. Ultimately, they rely on hotel staff to help provide them with unique experiences that are not mainstream and better known to locals.

"Travel is an opportunity for growth," said Sharon Cohen, vice president at **Fairmont Hotels & Resorts**, Paris. "Luxury travelers are looking for personal enrichment experiences with a lasting impact that extends beyond their journey."

The report is based on an online survey of 2,725 luxury travelers from France, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, China and the United Arab Emirates.

Authentic travel

Despite services such as Airbnb disrupting the travel industry, 93 percent of respondents still consider hotels an important part of the travel experience. Fifty-nine percent admit that hotel options influence their travel destinations.

While personable customer service will always be an important distinction in high-end hotels, guests also expect staff to be knowledgeable about the area and offer suggestions on activities.



Guests at the Fairmont Toronto. Image credit: Fairmont

Eighty-nine percent of respondents said the best hotels have concierge that will lead them to experiences only known by locals. Two out of three travelers also want more exclusive opportunities made available to them.

Ultra-personalized experiences are becoming more popular among the wealthy, according to a report from Virtuoso. For affluent travelers, these personalization requests go beyond upscale accommodations and events and instead include specific meals and personal photographers ([see story](#)).



Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club offers guests several safari tours. Image credit: Fairmont

When receiving recommendations, 84 percent of guests believe it is important that the experiences are not detrimental to the local community, and instead are positive and sustainable.

Such activities include meals with locally-sourced ingredients and other programming that engages travelers with local environments. The Fairmont Mount Kenya Safari Club offers guests the the unique opportunity to visit an animal orphanage, in addition to more traditional activities like horseback riding and croquet.

Fairmont plans to use the findings from the report for an upcoming video series on the state of the luxury hospitality industry.

Service commitment

Although Fairmont has a solid reputation for service and experiences among the luxury traveler set, it does occasionally blunder.

Fairmont has generally exceeded its competition in terms of favorability online from check-in and loyalty points, but one tweet from a disgruntled television personality saw a ripple effect.

The viral tweet may have had a more significant impact due to the hotel segment's lower volume of social conversation. With less people discussing travel and hospitality, the more one viral tweet stands out ([see story](#)).

Fairmont's report also found that 77 percent of guests will look to local hotels to provide engage activities in their hometown, for unique experiences without long-distance travel.

Pop-ups are one way to engage with locals.

Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is commemorating its longtime connection to the film industry with a traveling event series that will appeal to travelers and movie buffs.

Over the last several decades, Fairmont properties around the world have been featured in more than 250 motion pictures. The hospitality group, which is headquartered in Toronto, launched the event series "Fairmont Loves Film" at Fairmont Royal York during the Toronto International Film Festival ([see story](#)).

"Fairmont hotels are the heart of their communities, offering immersive experiences that open the door to local culture," Ms. Cohen said.

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