

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Ritz-Carlton shines spotlight on cinematic collaboration

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The cast and crew of "The Note." Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Marriott International's hospitality brand The Ritz-Carlton is bringing new depth to user-generated content through a collaborative filmmaking project with Hearst Magazines.

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"The Note" is the first film released of the "The Stay" series that was shot on-location at different Ritz-Carlton properties by five up-and-coming directors selected from 500 contestants. Luxury brands, especially in the hospitality industry, are focusing on more experiential strategies, including supporting the arts.

"The Stay offers an opportunity to tell the Ritz-Carlton brand story, as well as engage with our guests, in a new and different way," said Lisa Holladay, global brand leader at [The Ritz-Carlton](#). "Each Ritz-Carlton property is designed to tell a story, and this collaboration with Hearst Magazines Digital Media provides a platform to showcase the art and creativity of each writer while also offering a unique lens into the legendary Ritz-Carlton experiences around the world.

"Our main objective for this campaign is to highlight the infinite number of possibilities that a stay with the Ritz-Carlton can offer," she said. "So when someone sees these films I want their curiosity to be piqued."

Ritz storytelling

Writer-director Malcom Greenhill was the creative force behind The Note, the first film released from the project. It was filmed at the Ritz-Carlton Hotel de la Paix, Geneva in September.

The majority of the film's 11-minute runtime is spent inside a suite where a couple is staying. A character named Ingrid spends most of the day alone in the suite, ordering room service and watching classic movies, while her husband is at business meetings.

The first chapter of "The Stay," a filmmaking project from Ritz-Carlton

While many would be envious of a relaxing stay at a luxury hotel, it is clear Ingrid is also dealing with some apprehension and anxiety. Her husband encourages her to return to writing and suggests that the new scenery may be helpful.

One day, Ingrid receives a mysterious note from the room next door and slowly strikes up a friendship with an anonymous guest. After some back-and-forth, the letter writer motivates Ingrid to find the courage to leave her suite and meet in the lobby.

In the final scene, it is revealed that Ingrid's husband was leaving her the notes. For the first time in the film, she speaks and greets him with a heartfelt, "Hello."



The Ritz-Carlton Hotel de la Paix, Geneva. Image credit: Ritz-Carlton

Ritz-Carlton launched the contest this past June. A panel of five judges, including Academy Award-nominated writer/director Mike Figgis, YouTube's head of content for the EMEA region Luke Hyams, *Harper's Bazaar UK* digital editor Sarah Karmali, Esquire.com culture editor Tyler Coates and Lisa Holladay of The Ritz-Carlton, judged the submissions and selected the winners ([see story](#)).

"We were overwhelmed by the thoughtful submissions we received and look forward to sharing the winners' visions with the world," Ms. Holladay said. "I think it was giving these filmmakers the freedom bring their own unique perspectives to the project that help make *The Stay* so impactful."

Filming for *The Stay* was also done at Ritz-Carlton locations in Grand Cayman, Lake Tahoe, Ras Al Khaimah and Hong Kong. The second installment, "Encore," will premiere on Nov. 26.

Making memories

Ritz-Carlton's *The Stay* is the hotelier's largest undertaking since launching #RCMemories.

The #RCMemories initiative sees the hotel chain bringing in collaborators and guests from across the world to all of its locations in an attempt to create unique, exciting experiences for customers, who will share those experiences online. In this way, The Ritz-Carlton is hoping to create a self-perpetuating marketing model in which one customer's experience serves as advertising to bring in more customers ([see story](#)).

Marriott International is also hoping to help affluents create memories beyond the traditional hotel stay.

The hotel group is planning to grow its branded residential portfolio, which includes Ritz-Carlton and St. Regis projects, as more high-end homebuyers seek to establish luxury lifestyles in mixed-use residences. Ritz-Carlton has 35 projects open and has another 15 in development ([see story](#)).

"The Ritz-Carlton aims to be more than just a place to stay," Ms. Holladay said. "At the Ritz-Carlton, our mission is to inspire life's most meaningful journeys."