

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Fairmont explores cultural traditions with Great Big Story

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Great Big Story explores music and architecture in China. Image credit: Fairmont

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Hospitality group AccorHotels is giving fans a glimpse into emerging cultural scenes in Asia through a new docuseries in another effort to engage guests through storytelling.

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A collaboration with CNN International's Great Big Story, the four-part video series focuses on art, architecture and music and will be viewed on multiple platforms, with the debut video sponsored by the Fairmont brand. Luxury travelers are increasingly looking for more authentic experiences, and hospitality brands are meeting this demand both in-person and online.

"Established luxury brands often find themselves challenged with balancing the traditional elements at the core of their legacy and evolving to attract the next generation of luxury consumers," said Taylor Rains, managing partner at [Flugel Consulting](#), Charleston, S.C. "This collaboration reflects just that.

"The Shanghai Restoration Project, by nature, harkens back to a milestone era for luxury brands but reinterprets it in a way that is of the times and relevant," he said. "Through this alignment, Fairmont is presenting itself similarly as a brand with one foot in the past and one in the future."

Mr. Rains is not affiliated with AccorHotels, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [AccorHotels](#) was reached for comment.

Great big stories

The film series will give travelers additional context about some of the world's most popular destinations.

"Shanghai Jazz Gets an Electronica Twist" is the first video released in the series.



The Shanghai Restoration Project uses everyday sounds in its music. Image credit: Fairmont

With Shanghai Jazz reemerging as a musical force, the story follows a Brooklyn-based electronica band, the Shanghai Restoration Project. The duo takes inspiration from everyday noises to create their own musical sounds.

The film meets the band in their Brooklyn studio as they explain how they come across unique sounds, such as the rhythm of a poster hitting someone's leg. They believe that sound is a way that people can come together.

"Legendary Theatres of Shanghai" is the next episode in the series and will center on the legacy of Chinese cinema. Many of Shanghai's historic theaters are still in operation today.

Leaving Shanghai for the central city of Chengdu, the third film focuses on the International Butler Academy, where students learn about upscale domestic service. In "Restoring Singapore's History," Great Big Story will show viewers what goes into the conservation of historic buildings and monuments.

Experiential focus

AccorHotels' Fairmont brand has previously shared more about the cultural influences surrounding different hotel properties.

For instance, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts commemorated 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](#)).

In 2016, Fairmont also shared with consumers a different point of view through a photo exhibition.

The chain partnered with visual storytelling agency Namara to provide a behind-the-scenes look at global luxury hospitality services via a photo exhibition. Giving consumers a candid peek behind the curtain shows off the personal connection on which the hotel prides itself ([see story](#)).

"Monetizing the experiential is the name of the game for luxury brands," Mr. Rains said. "The traditional pillars of luxury, while still important, are no longer enough to distinguish one brand from another."

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