

IN-STORE

Perks, family activities highlight luxury hotels for August

August 12, 2011

Maui: where family is core to aloha spirit

By FOUR SEASONS FAMILY on August 8th, 2011 [1 COMMENT](#)

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Luxury hotels should focus on family travel and emphasize valued amenities to finish the summer on a high-note and increase brand loyalty in August.

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The most travelling done in August is generally by families with school-aged children as a last hurrah before the school year begins. In addition, travellers are increasingly looking for added value through extra amenities and VIP treatment when they stay in luxury resorts.

"The thing that you see a lot in the summer is the luxury traveller, who normally stays at these high-end hotels for business, bringing family," said Lisa Holt, marketing director of [DLS Hotels](#), Napa, CA.

"When a brand is already getting the high-end traveler on a business basis but now that person gets the opportunity to utilize their say, Ritz-Carlton credits at one of the resorts for a family vacation, it's an opportunity to solidify brand loyalty," she said.

Kidding around

Family activities and an emphasis on being kid-friendly can prove beneficial for luxury brands during the month of August.

This is because it is the last month before everybody goes back to school and the summer holidays are all about family travel, according to Ms. Holt.

Hotels should consider things such as special kids menus, kid camp programs and recreational family activities such as horseback riding, dirt biking or water activities.

"It's more expensive to take a family of three kids and fly to Thailand, so what you see is a lot of domestic family travel," Ms. Holt said. "And people feel more comfortable with their kids being in the country."

"For the big luxury brands it's all about emphasizing domestic resort destinations," she said.

Many luxury brands have already been promoting family recreation and kids activities.

For example, the **Gleneagles Hotel** in Scotland recently sent out an email with the headline "Summer Fun at Gleneagles."

Gleneagles will have "Jungle Madness" theme from Aug. 6 through Sept. 8 and will host splash parties, pitch n' putt, meet the ponies and various other kid-based activities.



Summer at Gleneagles

Dear Mr Alam Khan,

This is just a reminder to those who haven't yet booked a last minute summer break! The Gleneagles Hotel is a wonderful place to enjoy the great outdoors so don't miss out - now is the time to book!

School's out for summer!

Now that summer is here and the schools are all on holiday you might be struggling to keep the young ones amused. One thing's for sure, your kids will never be bored at Gleneagles. Our summer programme is bigger and more exciting than ever before.

Take a look at what is on for kids:

- From 6 August until 4 September, it's Jungle Madness.

Every day will include a themed activity, along with a whole host of fun events including: splash parties; pitch n putt; golf and tennis camps; archery; dancing; movies; meet the ponies; and teddy bear's picnics! [Find out more...](#)

In addition, the Four Seasons is kicking it up a notch with an entire blog dedicated to family travel titled **Have Family Will Travel** that highlights different activities at Four Seasons' properties that kids would enjoy.

The Four Seasons is also engaging with mothers, inviting them to send in pictures from their family vacations to the Four Seasons Flickr page.

Also, the **Ritz Carlton Palm Beach** location offers a kids program called AquaNuts that acts as a half-day camp for kids ages 5-12.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS



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AquaNuts Theme Days | AquaNuts Birthday Parties | Summer Camp
Ritz Kids - AquaNuts | Coast for Teens | Coast Birthday Parties | Children's Menu

Our Ritz Kids AquaNuts program offers a variety of supervised physical and creative activities designed especially for children aged 5 to 12. This unique facility is all about discovery and creativity both indoors and outdoors. With a dedicated playroom, computers, music and costumes, kids

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Work the perk

In addition to family activities, many luxury hotel experts have seen an upswing in the number of travelers who are looking for added value.

This does not necessarily mean offering a fourth night free, because for luxury consumers the price is not the issue.

Affluent travelers want to feel like their experience is different than anyone else's through added amenities and personalization.

"I would say our travellers are more and more looking for customized, unique experiences and they want to be treated like a VIP," said Terrie Hansen, vice president of marketing at **Virtuoso**, a luxury travel agency based in Fort Worth, Texas.

"It is about perks and privileges, so it seems to me that right now the travel suppliers are busting out the amenities," she said. "There is not a lot of 'wow' factor in price discounts."

For example, **The Fairmont Hamilton Princess** hotel in Bermuda is offering guests a \$400 hotel credit when they stay in August.

In addition, the **Boston Mandarin Oriental** is offering consumers who book a suite at the hotel complimentary limo pick-up and drop-off at the airport.

Luxury hotels need to key-in on engaging consumers through August, as the Fall offers a much smaller range of people who are available to travel leisurely.

"September and October are two of the slowest months of the year for resort hotels since kids are back to school," said Karen Weiner Escalera, president of **KWE Partners**, Miami. "And the fall is a time budgets and plans are finalized for the next calendar year, so it's a busy time at work,

"August is the time to try to get out promotions to spur last-minute business," she said. "Travelers will spend money when it comes to pursuing their interests and passions."

Final Take

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