

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Top 10 travel and hospitality headlines of H1 2019

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*Belmond El Encanto in Santa Barbara, CA. Image credit: Belmond*

By STAFF REPORTS

In a world where consumers are looking for their great next Instagram post, luxury travelers are seeking deeper experiences and trips that are unlike those of their peers, putting pressure on hospitality brands to innovate.

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So far this year, hospitality and travel brands are pushing further into the luxury space as well as curating experiences that will allow travelers to see parts of the world they would not normally see. In addition to these changing travel trends, uneasy political climates are straining where and how these affluents journey.

Here are the top 10 travel and hospitality headlines from the first half of 2019, in no particular order:



*The first Equinox Hotel is opening in Manhattan. Image credit: Equinox*

**Luxury fitness leader looks to disrupt hotel industry**

As the wellness industry continues to disrupt the hospitality business, luxury fitness company Equinox has debuted its own hotel brand.

Reservations are now available for the first Equinox Hotel property in New York's Manhattan borough. While luxury

hotels incorporate wellness amenities and activities, Equinox's fitness culture has influenced nearly all details of its hotel ([see story](#)).



*Among the hotels facing a boycott is the Beverly Hills Hotel. Image credit: Dorchester Collection*

#### Dorchester pulls hotel social profiles amid boycott

Hotel chain Dorchester Collection temporarily closed the social accounts for its properties as consumers voiced their dissent for the group's owner.

Dorchester is owned by the Sultan of Brunei, who was going to put into place one of the harshest versions of Sharia Law in his small monarchy in which citizens believed to be gay would be stoned and whipped to death. After experiencing backlash on social media, Dorchester decided to pull the accounts for its collection of hotels ([see story](#)).

#### LVMH gains approvals for Belmond acquisition

Conglomerate LVMH Mot Hennessy Louis Vuitton closed its acquisition of hospitality company Belmond earlier this year.

In a statement from April 12, LVMH noted that it received the necessary regulatory approvals from competition authorities to continue with the transaction. The purchase took place on April 17 ([see story](#)).



*Home rentals are becoming extremely popular. Image credit: Primo Destinations*

#### Marriott to launch home sharing service

Hospitality group Marriott International is looking to take on home sharing application Airbnb with its own version of rentals.

Airbnb is continuing to dominate the home rental space and is now gearing up for an initial public offering. Marriott is looking to take on the home rental space with a United States home sharing service, which started in May ([see story](#)).



*Vivrelle is bringing handbag rentals to SLS South Beach. Image courtesy of Vivrelle*

### Hotel adds luxury handbags to amenities

SLS South Beach in Miami recently embraced the sharing economy by offering its guests access to handbags from brands such as Chanel and Louis Vuitton through a partnership with membership platform Vivrelle.

The property launched a new complimentary service that will enable guests to borrow daytime and evening bags. Reflective of the growing consumer interest in fashion rentals, this also serves as an amenity, allowing consumers to pack less or experiment with a new style while away from home ([see story](#)).



*Mount Everest. Image credit: Wikimedia*

### As adventure travel climbs, Mount Everest attracts the wealthy, daring

A chaotic climbing season on Mount Everest drew attention to the lengths some of the most adventurous affluents will go to reach the world's highest peak.

At least 11 people have died on Mount Everest this year, with many experts adding overcrowding to the mountain's long list of dangerous conditions. While it is no doubt an impressive physical feat to reach the summit, it also comes with a six-figure price tag ([see story](#)).



*Hotel 1792 opens for a second year. Image credit: Ruinat*

### Ruinart opens its one-bedroom hotel for a second time

LVMH-owned Champagne house Ruinat leaned into the hospitality space, opening up its one-bedroom hotel for a second year.



Hotel 1729 opened again, this time with a design by Loewe creative director Jonathan Anderson. Named for the year its brand was founded, the hotel features one-of-a-kind experiences for a limited run ([see story](#)).



*Seabourn is one of the luxury cruise lines impacted by the new restrictions on travel to Cuba. Image credit: Seabourn*

Sudden US ban on Cuban cruises creates confusion for luxury lines

Luxury cruise lines and travelers are being left in the lurch after the United States banned cruise travel to Cuba with little warning.

Effective on June 5, the White House is no longer permitting group people-to-people educational travel to Cuba, essentially banning cruise ships and other recreational vessels from the U.S. from visiting the island. Since travel regulations were initially loosened in 2016, Cuba has become a popular tourist destination among affluents ([see story](#)).



*An Airbnb Luxe in Te Wanaka, New Zealand. Image credit: Airbnb*

Airbnb blends personalized service, home-sharing in Luxe offerings

Home-sharing platform Airbnb is continuing its pursuit of affluent clientele with the launch of Airbnb Luxe, amid increased competition in the temporary rental arena.

Demand for intimate and unique accommodations continues to grow among wealthy travelers, driving the popularity of Airbnb and similar services. Through Airbnb Luxe, the platform is making high-end homes available as well as trip designers who can arrange bespoke experiences ([see story](#)).



*The cruise line's Crystal Symphony ship. Image credit: Crystal*

Crystal Cruises continues sustainability with plastic straw ban

Luxury cruise line Crystal is doing its part to reduce plastic waste and ocean pollution with the banning of plastic straws, fleet wide.

As part of Crystal's sustainability initiative, named Crystal Cares, the cruise line will no longer have plastic straws available on any of its ships. Instead, paper straws will now be available at dining venues on the brand's cruise liners ([see story](#)).

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