

AUTOMOTIVE

Lexus lets guests take the wheel in hotel experience

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Lexus is hosting an off-road driving experience at Blackberry Mountain. Image courtesy of Lexus

By STAFF REPORTS

Toyota Corp.'s Lexus is teaming up with a Tennessee resort to give guests an off-roading experience in the Great Smoky Mountains.

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Lexus has expanded its Hotel Partner Program to include Blackberry Mountain, a Relais & Châteaux resort in Walland, TN. As part of its alliance with the resort, Lexus has established a driving course that takes advantage of the 5,200-acre property's mountainous terrain.

Challenging course

Blackberry Mountain is situated in Eastern Tennessee within the Great Smoky Mountains.

Lexus is giving guests a new way to take in the landscape by creating a 90-minute driving experience. Dubbed the Lexus Off-Road Adventure, the course includes six challenges, such as climbing and descending a hill, navigating rocks and logs and maneuvering the vehicle on a side tilt.

Throughout the drive, guests will be guided by a Blackberry Mountain representative, who will also talk them through the off-road challenges.

"Lexus and Blackberry Mountain are a terrific fit as we're both passionate about delivering amazing experiences for our guests," said Lisa Materazzo, vice president of Lexus marketing, in a statement. "Our GX 460 has off-road capabilities that few luxury SUVs can match, and there's no better way to experience them than a drive on this rugged and scenic trail."



Blackberry Mountain. Image credit: Blackberry Mountain

While Blackberry Mountain is a new addition to Lexus' hotel program, its sister property Blackberry Farm has an existing relationship with Lexus. Blackberry Farm guests can take a complimentary two-hour test drive in a Lexus.

Similarly, Blackberry Mountain will use a fleet of Lexus vehicles for guests as part of its alliance.

"I love that partnering with Lexus has allowed us to offer our guests the opportunity to explore the beautiful region we live in," said Mary Celeste Beall, proprietor of Blackberry Farm and Blackberry Mountain, in a statement. "We always enjoy the opportunity to work with a company that shares our commitment to quality and creating memorable experiences.

"With the addition of the off-road course, Lexus is creating another layer of adventure for guests to immerse themselves in exploration of the mountain," she said.

Tie-ups between automakers and hotels are mutually beneficial, enabling both to deliver on experience.

For instance, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts teamed up with Automobili Lamborghini to put guests in the driver's seat.

2016's edition of the Waldorf Astoria Driving Experiences included the opportunity to get behind the wheel of one of the Italian automaker's supercars, driving them through scenic routes. The experience was available at seven international hotels, coinciding with key events, reaching guests when they were apt to be visiting a particular city ([see story](#)).

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