

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## IHG links with luxury travel club for loyalty push

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*L'Htel Marrakech, one of the participating Mr & Mrs Smith properties. Image credit: L'Htel Marrakech*

By STAFF REPORTS

InterContinental Hotels Group is extending the number of luxury properties available to members of its loyalty program through a partnership with travel club Mr & Mrs Smith.

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Starting in 2020, IHG Rewards members will be able to earn and redeem points at 500 hotels in the handpicked Mr & Mrs Smith collection. Hotel firms have been working to boost their offerings to loyalty members beyond their own portfolios through partnerships and alliances.

"IHG's exclusive partnership with Mr & Mrs Smith illustrates the truly transformative travel we bring to our IHG Rewards Club members," said Claire Bennett, chief marketing officer of IHG, in a statement. "This loyalty partnership will allow our most loyal guests to discover even more of the world with the most incredible and inspiring luxury rewards."

"By bringing this spectacular collection of award-winning hotels to our direct booking channels, this partnership means members can earn and redeem points in some of the world's most sought-after destinations the perfect complement to IHG's growing luxury and boutique hotel portfolio, which includes InterContinental Hotels & Resorts and Six Senses Hotels Resorts Spas," she said.

### Loyalty alliance

Founded in 2003, Mr & Mrs Smith is a booking service that has curated a selection of 1,200 luxury and boutique properties. The club includes anonymous reviews from tastemakers, including designers and actors.

Through the relationship with IHG, Mr & Mrs Smith is giving the hotel group's 100 million loyalty members the chance to use their rewards on a selection of its properties when booking through IHG channels.

The 500 participating Mr & Mrs Smith properties include hotels that are in 14 countries where IHG does not currently have a footprint.

In addition to earning and using rewards at the hotels, some of IHG's VIPs will get perks such as Champagne or a massage once they are at the Mr & Mrs Smith property. The participating hotels may also offer IHG Rewards guests

room upgrades.



*Borgo Pignano in Tuscany is participating in the program. Image credit: Borgo Pignano*

"We conceived Mr & Mrs Smith for discerning travelers who want to discover truly extraordinary places with the people they love," said Tamara Lohan MBE, chief operating officer/cofounder of Mr & Mrs Smith, in a statement. "We are hugely excited about the opportunity to bring our growing collection of carefully curated boutique and luxury hotels to millions of IHG Rewards Club loyalty members, so they may join our members in experiencing some of the world's most seductive hotels."

Loyalty programs are one of the best ways to ensure continued customer retention, something hotel brands are embracing by unifying those programs across multiple brands and merging luxury with mass market.

Marriott International unified the loyalty programs across three of its brands, while Hyatt Hotels and Small Luxury Hotels of the World similarly combined their loyalty programs. By merging their programs across brands, these groups are pooling resources to gain access to a wider consumer base and ensure a seamless and desirable customer experience no matter where guests stay ([see story](#)).

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