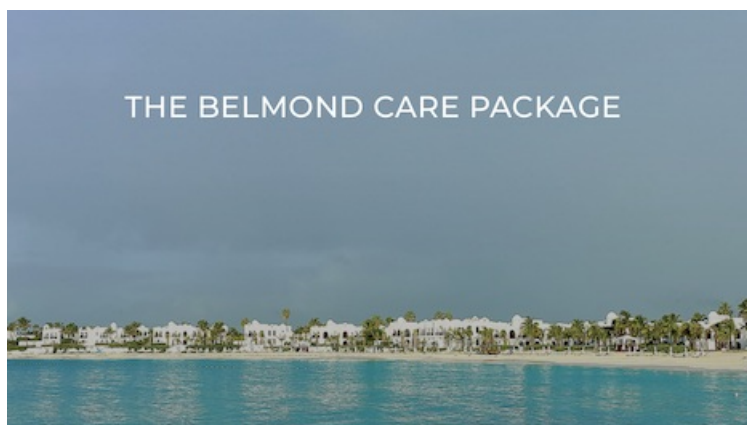


TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

## Four Seasons, Belmond lure homebound consumers with virtual events

March 31, 2020



*Belmond Hotel. Image credit: Belmond Hotel*

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Luxury hotels are keeping affluent consumers engaged with virtual events, betting that those stuck at home will be inspired to plan trips to their properties once travel regulations have eased.

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Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts and LVMH's Belmond hotel brand have both introduced new content marketing campaigns to stay in contact with their clientele.

"We are living through a time of unprecedented stillness, the world of travel has never experienced anything like this," said Arnaud Champenois, senior vice president of marketing and branding at Belmond, London.

"However, whilst travel is on pause, it is our role as a brand to inspire and keep the dream alive," he said. "We want to continue to provide experiences for our followers while they are at home."

**Belmond** is part of French conglomerate and Louis Vuitton owner LVMH's portfolio of 75 luxury brands.

### Belmond Care Package

Belmond kicked off its digital event series, Belmond Invitations, with a Roaring Twenties-inspired party last week. Each week, the hotel group will livestream virtual programs with entertaining experiences for the armchair traveler.

The events will go live on the brand's Instagram page, **Belmond IGTV**.

Last week, British pianist **Joe Stilgoe** played live music of the Jazz Age in tribute to Belmond's Venice Simplon-Orient-Express, which was supposed to host a live Roaring Twenties-themed ride this past weekend before the pandemic hit.

"We can't travel to the party, but we can be transported by the music," Mr. Champenois said.

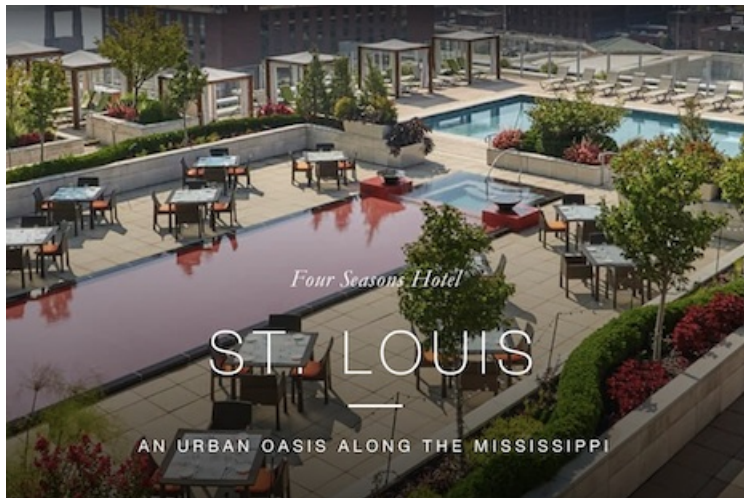
The Belmond Invitation series of online content will be curated around Belmond's Good Living philosophy of well-being experiences that enrich mind, body and soul.

Future live programming will include poetry and music inspired by travel, as well as calming meditation practices

and nutrition classes.

The next event on Friday, April 3 will feature a guided meditation from yoga guru Nadia Narain.

"There is a huge demand for online content and entertainment and we wanted to provide our followers, which include our guests, trade partners, media and friends of the brand, with content that will keep them connected and offer them a moment of virtual escapism," Mr. Champenois said.



*Four Seasons St. Louis, MO. Image credit: Four Seasons St. Louis*

#### Four Seasons experiences

Four Seasons is also hoping to connect to its fans at home by sharing wellness tips and tricks to help people maintain physical and mental health from its spa and wellness experts from around the world.

"The strategy is the recognition that people are largely at home right now," said Erin Stewart, spa director at Four Seasons Hotel St. Louis, St. Louis, MO.

"We're used to people coming to us to relax," she said. "Now we find ourselves in a position to bring relaxation to them.

"Our team is happy to share advice for self-care and wellness. The current climate of uncertainty has imposed stress on us all, we are no different. We find these at-home rituals to be calming, convenient and easy to implement on a daily basis."

Content includes tips on how to turn everyday activities into exercise and how to turn the bathroom into a DIY home spa.

Additional content promotes meditation, breathing exercises and home acupressure ideas.

This content is for everyone, not just spa enthusiasts.

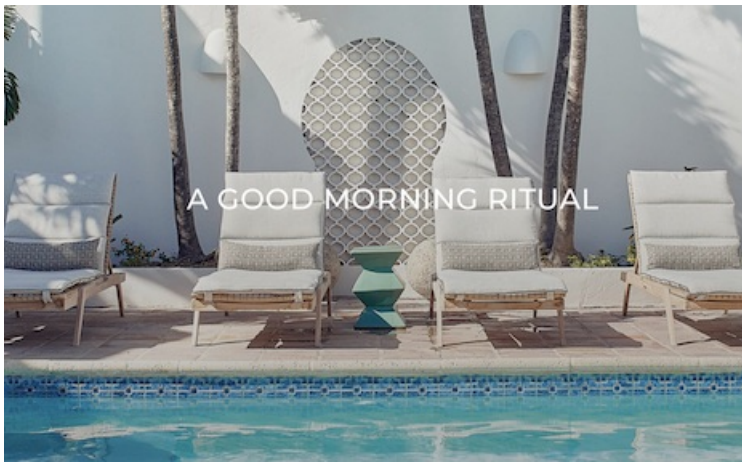
"This advice is applicable for anyone looking to increase self-care," Ms. Stewart said. "It could be a busy mom, business professional or frequent traveler seeking an antidote for cabin fever."

By connecting to its network, Four Seasons has an opportunity to reach its travel fans, as well as people in the local area that may occasionally come for dinner or to use their local spa.

"In this time of stillness, there is a strong sense of community more now than ever before," said Michael Law, senior director of marketing at Four Seasons New York Downtown, New York.

"We are here to support the local businesses and brand partners affected by this crisis while keeping the spirit of our brand alive during this moment of pause," he said.

"We are here to deliver uplifting messages to our team, our devoted fans, our clientele and our community," he said. "We want to provide ways to experience Four Seasons in the comfort of your own home."



*Belmond Hotel. Image credit: Belmond Hotel*

### Armchair travel planning

As people are stuck at home, many take pleasure in the fantasy of their next trip once the pandemic has passed.

These hotel chains have an opportunity to cultivate their audience with content, whether that is through guided meditations and cooking classes or through imagery and stories of exotic locales.

"Even though people can't travel at this moment, we can still offer a virtual escapism and dream about the time when we can cross borders again," Mr. Champenois said.

"Now, with over a billion monthly active users, live video on Instagram allows brands to connect with their audiences in real-time and bring a taste of their world directly into a guest's homes," he said.

"It is the perfect opportunity to strengthen the ever-important relationship between brands and their audience by providing entertainment and some light relief during these testing times.

"There will be a great desire to explore again and we want to continue to inspire during this time when the situation is changing on a daily basis."

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