

ADVERTISING

Family fun, private accommodations lure affluent travelers this holiday season

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Luxury hotels need to focus on multi-generational family-oriented activities and private accommodations if they wish to get the largest piece of the pie when it comes to holiday travel this year.

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Promoting separate activities for a variety of age groups such as toddlers, teenagers and parents along with family-centered activities will help luxury hotels lure in guests this holiday season. Affluent consumers are willing to pay for added value and exceptional experiences, particularly to reward themselves during the holidays after the tough economic year.

“Luxury travelers are looking to be with family and for quality where they can have an authentic escape,” said Albert Herrera, vice president of hotels, destinations and tours at **Virtuoso**, New York. “We’ve noticed that especially for this year.

“The luxury travelers don’t mind spending top-dollar as long as they are able to have the right accommodations and destinations to be with their loved ones,” he said.

Family values

While holiday travel is often a busy season for all hotel brands, affluent consumers are going to be looking for the added value that one luxury hotel might provide.

For luxury travelers, value is not so much about discounts and free breakfasts, but more about rare experiences and stress-free days.

To key in on this, luxury hotels should look to promote two different types of recreational activities: some for kids exclusively and some for parents and children to do together.

“Holidays are a good time for family travelers,” said Lisa Holt, marketing director of **DLS Hotels**, Napa, CA.

“The key market segment that luxury hotels need to promote is multi-generational travel, such as activities for kids to participate in and special holiday events for the whole family to enjoy,” she said.



Additionally, luxury travelers are often looking for an authentic escape during the holidays.

Because of this, luxury villas and private suites are likely to do very well this holiday season, per Virtuoso's Mr. Herrera.

Spreading the cheer

Now is the time for hotels to really start promoting their various winter offerings since affluent consumers are looking and ready to book holiday travel.

After all, holiday travel is expected to rise 6 percent compared to last year ([see story](#)).

Even still, most luxury consumers' reasons for travel this season is to spend time with their families.

Some hotels already have their holiday travel promotions underway.

For example, Gleneagles Hotel in Scotland is promoting its January Break package via email, which comes with a special mother/daughter-gear special of a half-price spa treatment when guests book one full-priced treatment, as well as various complimentary activities for children.

Additionally, the Four Seasons in Whistler offers a number of children and family-centric services such as ski lessons, group ski lessons, snow shoeing, snow tubing and bald eagle watching.

The Four Seasons also posted new “trends in family traveling” blog post on its Have Family, Will Travel branded blog.



Also, the Mandarin Oriental is offering a family-oriented “Hansel and Gretel” package, complete with four tickets to the opera and a horse-and-carriage ride through New York’s Central Park ([see story](#)).

“A hotel’s family activities are one thing, but the added value is what the hotel is doing for the kids,” Virtuoso’s Mr. Herrera said.

“For luxury travelers, hotels need to look at what they can do to make it a more memorable and authentic occasion,” he said.

Final Take

Kayla Hutzler, editorial assistant at Luxury Daily, New York

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