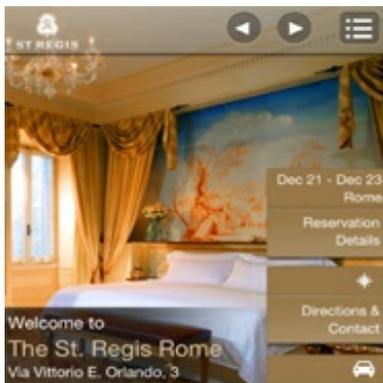


MOBILE

## Starwood caters to loyalists through highly-personalized app updates

March 16, 2012



By RACHEL LAMB

Starwood Hotels & Resorts' Preferred Guest program updated its mobile application to create a seamless, guest-centric experience for all nine of its brands, including St. Regis and The Luxury Collection.

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**Luxury Daily**

SPG's app updates include content based on whether or not the user is planning, en route or already checked-in to a specific hotel. It is available for free in Apple's App Store for the iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad.

"The new app allows SPG to build an even deeper relationship with our guests and provide them with everything they need, whether they're on the road or at home," said Chris Holdren, senior vice president of Starwood Preferred Guest and digital, New York.

"From program info and booking, to local attractions and tips from other members through social media integration, the app integrates several useful functions and member details within one convenient, well-designed interface," he said.

"A customized SPG experience is part of Starwood's overall commitment to personalized service and our breakthrough SPG benefits have helped earn us the most passionate and knowledgeable membership base in the industry."

Starwood partnered with [Bottle Rocket](#) for this app.

Customer facetime

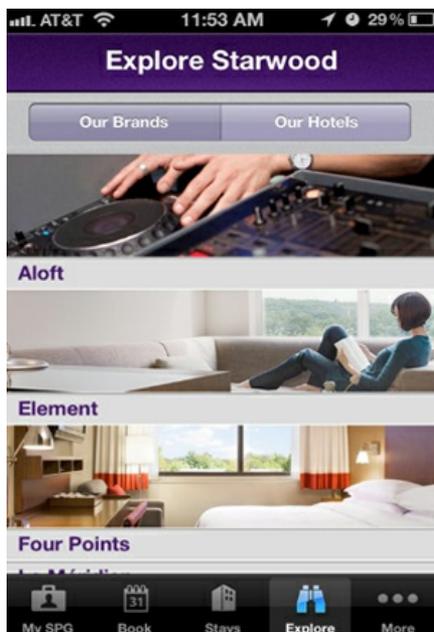
The newest update includes quite a few new features, particularly a new user interface that aggregates a user-specific look and content based on the consumer's booking and staying process.

The personalized "My Stay" interface allows fully-integrated booking, member information, hotel searches, travel details, FaceTime customer service and social media.

The updates are aligned with new SPG policies including 24-hour check-in and check-out, lifetime status and Starwood ambassadors that were implemented just last month ([see story](#)).

Users must enter their SPG information to have the personalized experience.

Detailed information, photo galleries, transportation options, weather and local attractions are available for each hotel at each of Starwood's brands when consumers are in the booking and researching process.



### *Exploring Starwood*

Starting 48 hours before a guest's stay, a push notification is sent and rearranges the interface to become reflective of the specific brand and property.

Details include weather, the hotel address in English and the local language, directions and hotel amenities.

When consumers are at the property, they can check-in on Foursquare and other social media, hotel information and room number and on- and off-property dining and activity suggestions.



### *Aggregated guest content at check-in*

To appeal to a wider range of consumers, the SPG app will be updated throughout 2012 with additional versions in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, French, Italian and Spanish, claims the brand.

"A great majority of our mobile bookings originate on the iOS platform, which is why we created the new SPG app to seamlessly integrate our content into the Apple's famously user-friendly interface," Mr. Holdren said. "The new version is currently built for iPhone and iPod Touch."

The app will also be available for other mobile devices later this year.

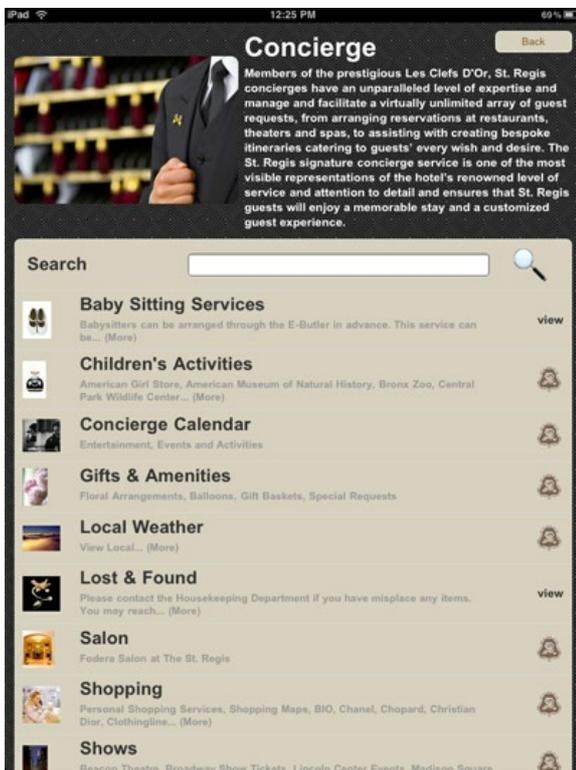
### Preferred treatment

SPG's app was updated based on recent research that showed nearly two-thirds of all mobile bookings are made within 24 hours of a guest's stay.

Indeed, Starwood saw a 300 percent increase in all mobile traffic in 2011, claims the brand.

Starwood already has a mobile presence – in addition to mobile sites for all of its brands, the company invests in banner ads, Foursquare and individual apps for hotel brands.

For example, St. Regis New York gives guests a bite of the Big Apple with its custom E-Butler iPad app that serves as a concierge and an insider's guide to New York ([see story](#)).



### *St. Regis eButler app*

By increasing offers in multiple channels for preferred guests – Starwood’s most loyal customers – the company can reach them wherever they feel fit.

Furthermore, by personalizing the interface throughout consumers’ journey, Starwood increases the overall user experience.

"We talked extensively with our most loyal guests while developing the app [and] we think its all-in-one interface and service oriented features, like providing the hotel address in English as well as the local language, will be especially appreciated by our frequent travelers," Mr. Holdren said.

"And, for an even higher level of personalized service, the app uses location services to connect our guests, as needed, to our customer service teams including a live FaceTime support option or through automatically connecting members to the right number to call based on where they are in the world," he said.

### Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/N65zNYrnhy0>