

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Ritz-Carlton revels in magic of central Europe for festive season

December 6, 2023



Vacations in three festive cities are framed as making for the perfect holiday present. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

By EMILY IRIS DEGN

Marriott International-owned hotel and resort chain The Ritz-Carlton is celebrating a festive time of year in two Alpine countries.

The brand's new "A Present to Remember" campaign brings to life the magic of the holiday season and the company's part to play in it. Making the case for the experiential category of which it is a part, The Ritz-Carlton is painting luxury vacations as the perfect way to treat loved ones this December, making its properties in Vienna, Austria; Berlin, Germany and Wolfsburg, Germany the settings of three merriment-filled videos.

"The campaign is a standout because it hits all the right notes," said Dorothy Mannfolk, founder and owner of [Mannfolk Public Relations](#), Burbank.

"It reminds us of family, of valuing togetherness at this time of the year, and offers a sense of wonder and awe," Ms. Mannfolk said. "With these videos people, both locally and internationally, will get the message that the brand speaks for the entire region.

"The locals will feel that they are being positively exposed to the rest of the world while from the outside looking in, people will come to look to the brand for the kind of hospitality they expect when they travel."

Ms. Mannfolk is not affiliated with The Ritz-Carlton, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Austria to Germany

From the craftsmanship of Vienna to the glamor of Berlin, the three central European cities are on full display in the new campaign.

In each, a couple explores the city of which their respective slot is centered. Finding treasures indoors too, the characters discover the local positioning of The Ritz-Carlton hotel they are staying at.

The Ritz-Carlton takes viewers to Vienna

The properties reflect the city to guests, offering a taste of the destination that is specifically built with a luxury experience in mind.

The trio of locations that are at the heart of the campaign are extremely popular holiday hotspots.

When planning December trips, many travelers are seeking out Bavarian architecture, Weihnachtsmarkt shopping, Alpine weather and, among other things, Old World celebrations. Spaces that include attractions like these seem to dominate social media feeds during this time of year, proving to be effective elements with which to attract visitors.

"Of course, European countries bring to mind much-loved holiday traditions," said Ms. Mannfolk.



The holiday decorations of each hotel take a center spot. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

"The architecture conjures up visions of cozy inns and warm hearths, and the weather is Christmas-y cold," she said. "We've come to associate all these with small towns in Europe and it's become an automatic signifier of the holidays.

"Meanwhile, Berlin, Vienna, and Wolfsburg go all out in creating festivities that bring people together with fun, food, and music, so it's no wonder they become favorite destinations for holiday travel."

All of this is highlighted in "A Present to Remember." Christmas lights and garlands appear throughout the scenes that The Ritz-Carlton calls "picture perfect."



Couples cozy up with glasses of wine and head out into the snow to explore. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

Potential vacations are laid out for viewers, as the couples in each video enjoy the festive urban centers and decked-out hotels.

In Vienna, bespoke hospitality is promoted, the couple enjoying holiday gifts, personalized service and more during their stay. In some scenes, they have a child with them, making them the only pair in the overarching campaign to be inclusive of young ones.

Though the angle leans into the growing demand for family-friendly luxury vacations ([see story](#)), the adults' identity as a romantic duo seems to be the main driver of the narrative.

As the man and woman walk down cobblestone streets, their faces glow in the warmth of workshop windows and the sparkling glass art that the city is so famed for.



The pair in Vienna are the only ones to have a child, their slot perhaps appealing to the growing number of families looking to take luxury trips. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

The Ritz-Carlton advertises Vienna's heirloom and crafting markets, baroque architecture and carriage rides through the Christmas festivities. The hotel in Austria's capital mirrors these parts of the location's identity, such as through the artistic touches to the interiors and the warm cocktails served roofside, where guests can take in the views of the Salzburg region.

Berlin's portion of the campaign hones in on the bustling atmosphere the city offers, from the Art Deco influences to the trademark theaters presenting variety shows.

The hotel is shown gleaming in the video as the starring couple explore the surroundings and the building itself. Holiday decorations, piles of pastries, bubbling Champagne and other seasonal perks all appear.



The couple in Berlin is shown to be aware that they are making memories in real-time. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

The pair is later shown admiring photographs from their time spent at the property, affirming the overarching message that to go on vacation is to spend money well, or at least make for a great gift.

Finally, in Wolfsburg, the booming culinary scene grounds the visuals.

Three-star Michelin restaurants, one of the on-site dining spaces; five-course and eight-course meals; afternoon teas and holiday brunches are just a few food-focused draws to the hotel itself.

The gastronomical aspects do not end there. At a German market nearby, the couple in this last video feasts on classics like succulent bratwurst, potato pancakes and warming mulled wine in the winter cold.



The culinary perks of visiting Wolfsburg are centered in the city's respective slot for the campaign. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

The Ritz-Carlton Wolfsburg embraces this identifying industry of the city, emphasizing its good eats in-house.

In each of the German and Austrian cities, the brand is shown not only welcoming tourists but engaging with the culture itself. The hotels are not painted as passive places for visitors to stay, only to go out to see what the destination is truly about.

These three addresses appear to encapsulate the traditions that dominate their locales, providing a high-end yet authentic experience abroad.

Enraptured with the experiential

The Ritz-Carlton positions these trips as "unforgettable holiday gifts" and as "moments you'll unwrap again and again."



The couples are shown in their respective destinations enjoying the hotels and cities equally. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

This largely supports the growing sentiment on the part of luxury consumers that intangible buys are worth more than physical items. Whether this is because objects can go out of style or break, or because ultra-high-net-worth individuals' (UHNWI) priorities are changing, the fact remains that their purchasing patterns are shifting.

Many are choosing family vacations over leaving inheritances for their children ([see story](#)), all the while investors are eyeing the experiential market to put their funds into.

According to the Global Fashion & Luxury Private Equity and Investors Survey 2023 from global consulting firm Deloitte, 49 percent believe that restaurants and hotels are the sectors that will grow the fastest this year. Interest continues to build in these categories as other markets stumble in light of international crises and economic turbulence ([see story](#)).



In Berlin, the city's Art Deco heritage is celebrated at the hotel. Image credit: The Ritz-Carlton

The majority of UHNWI are taking particular notice of the allure of Europe when it comes to tourism ([see story](#)), and with the surge in five-star bookings last year ([see story](#)), it is no wonder that many hospitality companies are looking to expand their prestige footprint on the continent with hotel openings ([see story](#)) and immersive stays ([see story](#)).

The Ritz-Carlton's newest campaign slides right into this trend train, following the boosting of its online image ([see story](#)) and the release of a milestone advertising slot ([see story](#)), which like this current push, put the intangible benefits of travel in the spotlight.

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