

IN-STORE

Mandarin Oriental pushes culinary offerings via airline partnership

May 4, 2012



By TRICIA CARR

Hotel brand Mandarin Oriental's Hong Kong property is partnering with Chinese airline Dragonair to provide an inflight menu that offers dishes from the hotel's on-site chef.

[Sign up now](#)

Luxury Daily

Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, is raising awareness for its 10 restaurants by creating a menu that will be offered to passengers on Hong Kong-based Dragonair flights to Beijing and Shanghai. Each dish was adapted by the hotel's executive chef Uwe Opocensky and will use fine, seasonal ingredients, per the hotel.

“I think the strategy behind this partnership was to connect two well-known brands to enhance the image of each,” said Heather Dillon, a Los Angeles-based public relations and social media consultant.

“These brands are driven by the rarity, uniqueness and excitement that such partnerships may provide,” she said. “They also share similar target audiences so each will benefit from the association with the other and really it is a win-win for both.

“These kinds of partnerships can make a brand seem more seem hipper, more modern, more distinctive, more interesting and more noteworthy.”

Ms. Dillon is not affiliated with Mandarin Oriental, but agreed to comment as an industry

expert.

Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, could not be reached before press deadline.

First class eats

Dragonair is the first air carrier to partner with Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, to serve the hotel's signature dishes.

The menu will include 23 appetizers and main courses from the hotel's 10 restaurants.

First class and business class travelers will have access to the menu.

Items offered to passengers include the signature Forest Walk foie gras and black cod dishes from the Mandarin Grill + Bar and The Chinnery's shepherd's pie.



Forest Walk foie gras with mushrooms and brioche

The menu will be available through April 2013.



Black cod with brown ginger sauce and seaweed pappardelle

“The alliance with Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, lends a luxury pedigree to Dragonair and introduces potential clients to both brands,” said Karen Weiner Escalera, president of [KWE Partners](#), Miami.

“There is a precedent for this kind of airline partnership with world-class chefs who are brands in themselves,” she said. “The challenge, though, is always to be able to produce the quality of food on board that does justice to the brand given the limitations of airline catering.”

Food for thought

Many hotel brands have been focusing on culinary offerings, most likely to draw local consumers that the hotel cannot reach with travel packages.

For example, The Dorchester Collection’s 45 Park Lane hotel in London hosted an event with on-site restaurant owner Wolfgang Puck aimed at local affluent consumers ([see story](#)).

In addition, Starwood Hotels & Resorts’ St. Regis Aspen Resort will debut a concept restaurant through an exclusive licensing agreement with American Express Publishing’s Food & Wine that will strategically coincide with Aspen’s annual Food & Wine Classic and the completion of a \$40 million redesign ([see story](#)).

By aligning with a local air carrier, Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, will reinforce its image and increase awareness in an unexpected way, per Ms. Dillon.

“It is important for Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong, to promote the food it offers because it adds to its credibility,” Ms. Dillon said. “The guests of Dragonair will feel better about the delicious food they are eating because they know the dishes are made from the best, high-quality ingredients.

“Mandarin Oriental will benefit through this positive association and the advertisement of their products and brand name,” she said. “Its exposure, undoubtedly, will infinitely grow.”

Final Take

Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.