

INTERNET

St. Regis targets ultra-affluent travelers via Departures digital ads

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By TRICIA CARR

Starwood Hotels & Resorts' St. Regis brand is taking up the banner and side-panel advertising space on American Express Publishing's Departures Web site to push its new Grand Tour packages to an ultra-affluent audience.

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Luxury Daily

The banner and side-panel ads flash between two different images of St. Regis properties to raise awareness for the new Grand Tour package that gives guests culinary benefits and a gift with each stay. The ads bring consumers to a site where they can book packages based on the country they wish to visit, likely to trigger instantaneous bookings.

"Luxury brands benefit from advertising on Departures.com because they are gaining access to our coveted audience of American Express Platinum Card and Centurion members who are seeking the highest-quality goods and services and primed to spend on these products and experiences," said Steven DeLuca, vice president and publisher of *Departures*, New York.

"Great brands want to be around great brands," he said. St. Regis and Departures are like-minded brands in the authentic luxury space.

"Advertising on Departures.com or in Departures – be it an online ad or a print ad – is

highly-efficient marketing and the best targeting a client can attain in order to reach and impact our affluent audience."

St. Regis was not available for comment before press deadline.

A grand tour

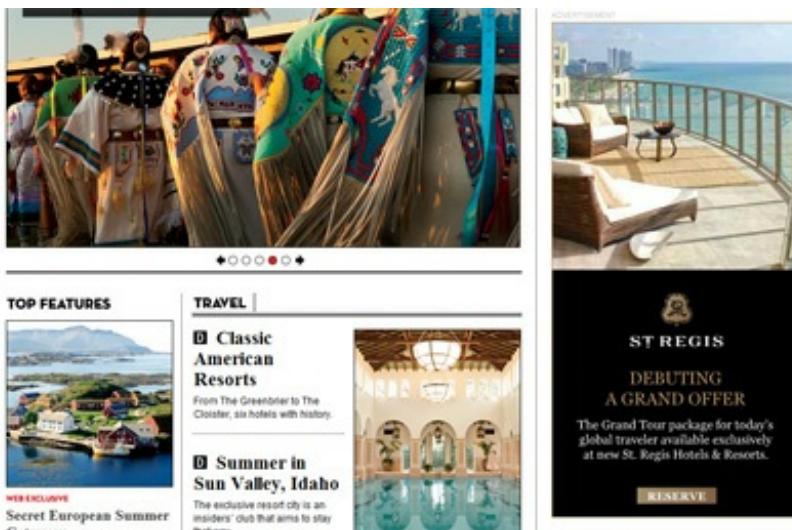
The St. Regis banner and side-panel ads show images from its properties that are included in the Grand Tour package. The background of the add is black and contains the St. Regis logo and text that explains the debut of the package.



St. Regis ads on Departures.com

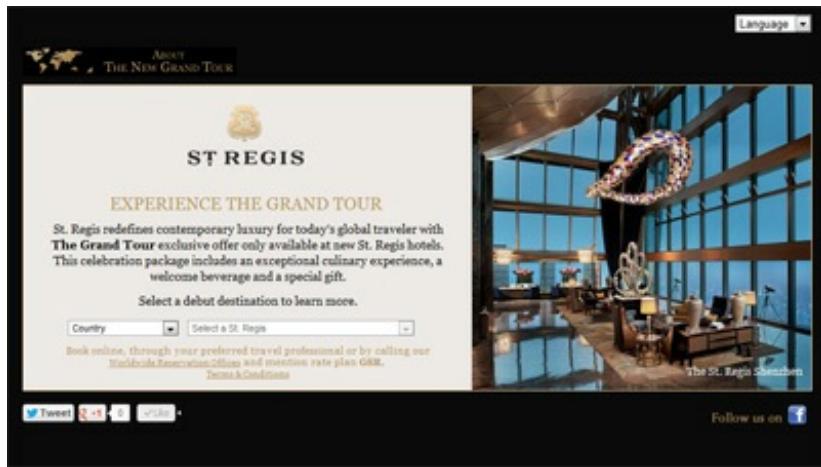
The banner ad alternates with in-house advertising for Departures' newsletter and The Book of Extraordinary Experiences as well as a Jeep ad.

In addition, the side-panel ad space alternates with brands such as Delta, Jeep and Departures' Wine Reserve club.



St. Regis side-panel ad on Departures.com

When clicked, users are taken to a St. Regis site where they can book the Grand Tour package in the United States, China, Italy, Mauritius, Qatar and United Arab Emirates.



The Grand Tour Website

Consumers are told that the Grand Tour is an exclusive offer available at new St. Regis hotels. It includes culinary benefits, a welcome beverage and a gift.

When users select a country and hotel from the drop-down menu, more information appears about the package at the property below the navigation space.

For example, the Grand Tour package at the St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort includes a tasting menu and bottle of wine at on-property restaurant J&G Grill and a hardcover copy of the book, "Jean-Georges: Cooking at Home with a Four-Star Chef."

Also, the package at St. Regis Florence includes a three-course meal and wine at the property's Etichetta restaurant and products from local store Officina Profumo-Farmaceutica di Santa Maria Novella.

Users can click the reserve button with any package description to search for available dates and book the package online.

Print vs. digital

St. Regis likely chose to reach out to Departures readers because they are passionate about travel.

Indeed, the ultra-affluent audience of Departures' print, digital and mobile channels makes it a publication where high-end travel brands can get traction from consumers who have the means to spend.

Interestingly, St. Regis was not an advertiser in the July/August issue of Departures, but chose its digital channel to reach its target consumers ([see story](#)).

St. Regis seems to be a favored brand among Departures readers since the inaugural edition of the publication's Black Book mobile application included content about the new St. Regis Bal Harbour property ([see story](#)).

Meanwhile, the print edition of Departures lets advertisers be a part of the lifestyle, but digital ads can appeal to the emotions and trigger immediate bookings.

"Our audience is highly engaged," Mr. DeLuca said. "They spend a lot of time on our site, with our apps and in print perusing our award-winning content and acting upon it."

"Departures readers are among the most traveled in the world and are always looking for their next experience," he said.

Final Take

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