

MOBILE

Crystal Cruises bridges mobile, print via watermarked ads

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By RACHEL LAMB

Crystal Cruises is bridging the gap between old- and new-world technology via a print advertisement that uses mobile application Aurasma to bring the static ad to life.

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Breaking away from 2D bar codes typically used in print ads, Aurasma technology allows a brand to engage mobile without placing a bar code in their ad. Crystal Cruises' ads appear in Condé Nast Traveler, National Geographic Traveler, Town & Country, Travel & Leisure, Coastal Living, Elle Décor, Food & Wine and Forbes Life.

"It is a novel, yet highly cost-efficient, way of extending the life and impact of our print material," said Nitsa Lewis, vice president of marketing for **Crystal Cruises**, Los Angeles.

"We do not have the huge budgets needed to mount a national television campaign, but we have still created compelling video material about the adventures you can experience on a Crystal Cruise," she said. "By smart uses of the latest technology, we can take that video message and present it to our target audience off the printed page."

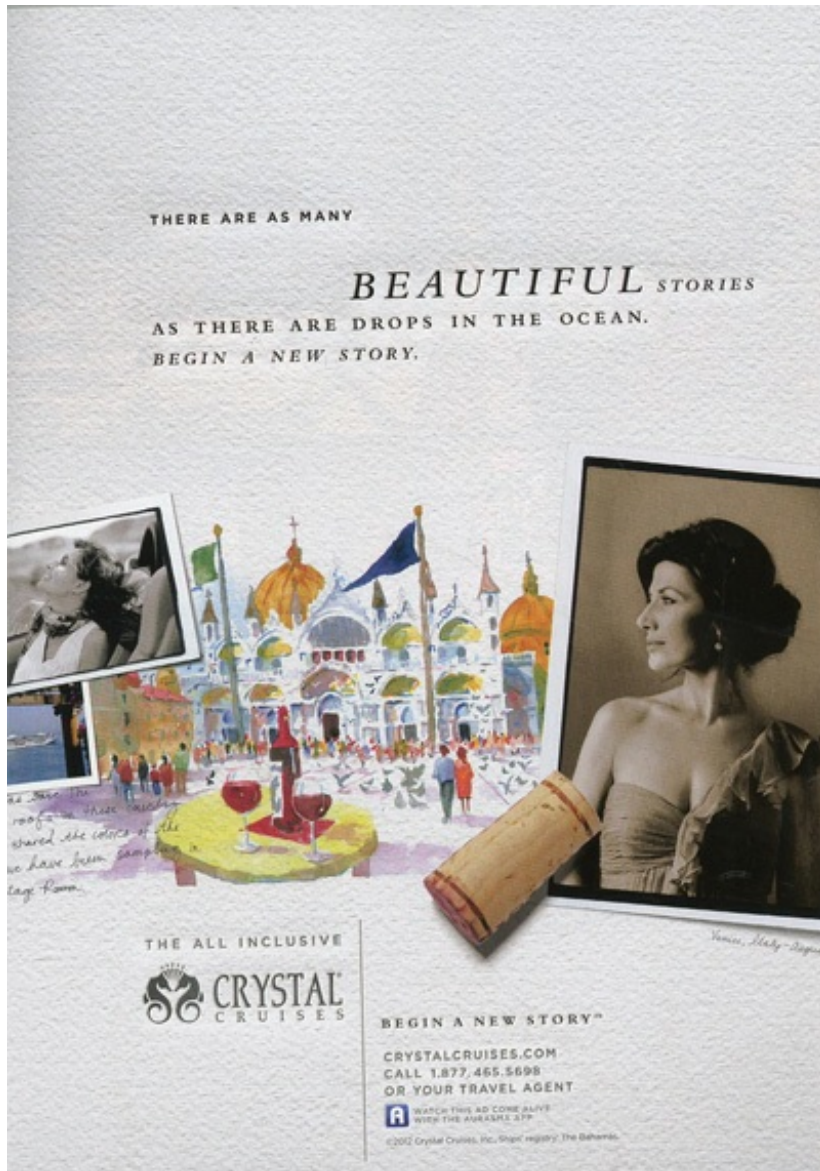
Crystal clear

The Crystal Cruises ads encourage consumers to begin a new story through Crystal Cruises.

For example, the ad in the August edition of Travel + Leisure shows an image of Venice, Italy, that sets off the Aurasma app.

The text reads, “There are as many beautiful stories as there are drops in the ocean. Begin a new story.”

There is a Aurasma call-to-action at the bottom of the ad.



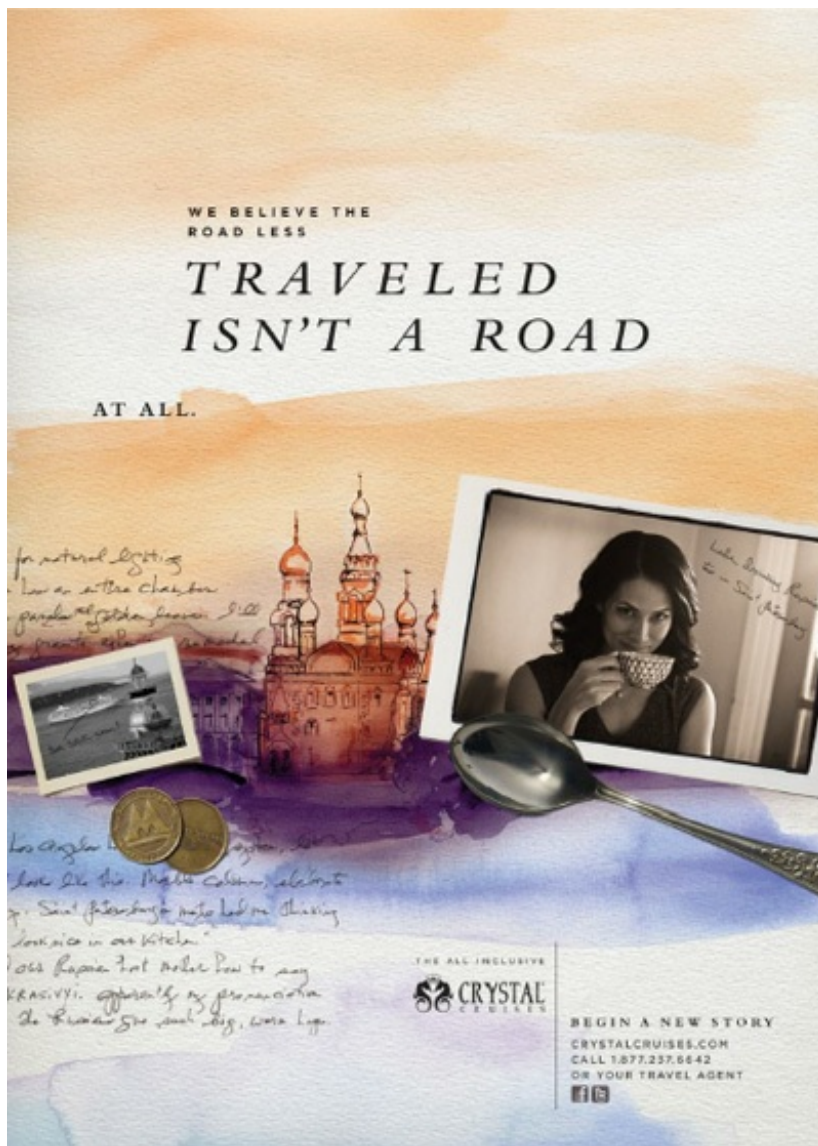
Crystal Cruises print ad

Consumers can access the content in the Crystal Cruises ad by downloading the Aurasma app.

Once it is engaged, users can hold their phone over the ad and wait for it to come to life.

A short video detailing the cruise line's new rebranding campaign, Begin a New Story, plays for the viewer ([see story](#)).

The Begin a New Story campaign is reaching consumers via watermark technology such as Aurasma in addition to a storytelling smartphone application.



Another print ad

“Crystal goes to great lengths to deliver the best user experience to our guests, and that does not mean just on board our ships,” Ms. Lewis said. “All of our marketing material is designed to set us apart from our competition, and this is just another example of that.

“Aurasma allows us to deliver real engagement to potential guests from an otherwise passive print medium,” she said. “Viewing a Crystal print ad is a more rewarding, involving experience as a result.”

Crystal clear

More ads are breaking away from QR codes in favor of watermark technology such as Aurasma.

For example, Starwood Hotels & Resorts is incorporating watermarks in print advertisements that display new content and editorial in the April issue of *Saveur* magazine.

Readers can access the ad’s content on their smartphones by pointing the phone’s camera at the full-page ad when the Digimarc application is loaded. The ad reveals content within the Digimarc app about Starwood’s Hawaii properties ([see story](#)).

In addition, online retailer Net-A-Porter used augmented reality-enabled print advertisements to intrigue tech-savvy shoppers when it launched its first print ads for the fall 2011 collections ([see story](#)).

Brands may be opting for augmented reality or Aurasma because the more subtle logo – most Aurasma ads have a small “A” logo on them that tells consumers that they can use their smartphone to scan – is more aligned with a luxury image than a cumbersome bar code.

Moreover, Crystal Cruises found that this technology was more in-tune with its goals.

“QR codes have not really been embraced by consumers, and simply taking readers to a Web site was never our intention here,” Ms. Lewis said. “We wanted to generate involvement among potential guests, highlighting the experiences possible on a Crystal Cruise.

“Aurasma gave us the opportunity to present readers with a virtually instant link to our compelling video material,” she said. “Having viewed that, they then have the option of investigating further by visiting our Web site.”

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York