

ADVERTISING

Harrods partners with MasterCard to bolster on-site services

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By TRICIA CARR

London department store Harrods is participating in MasterCard's Priceless London initiative to give cardholders access to exclusive packages and perks that leverage its British roots and on-site services.

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Luxury Daily

Harrods is offering spa services, tours, dining packages and a discount under its rewards program as part of Priceless London, the MasterCard-created benefits program that coordinates exclusive access to local landmarks and events. Many hotel brands partner with major credit cards to offer perks to affluent users and boost brand loyalty, and with Harrods' status as a tourist and shopping destination, its MasterCard involvement works in the same way.

"Harrods had nothing to lose by participating in this MasterCard promotion and it potentially had a lot to gain," said Al Ries, chairman of marketing consultancy **Ries & Ries**, Roswell, GA. "It probably cost almost nothing to host the consumers who signed up for the program and it could result in additional sales plus the positive word-of-mouth by consumers who took the tour.

"Credit card users are generally upscale as compared to the population, as a whole," he said. "Therefore, most credit card users are good prospects for luxury brands," he said.

“Basically, it would help reach older, high-net-worth consumers who have the money to buy this deal plus the free time to spare and, in particular, it would be attractive for upscale tourists.”

Harrods could not comment before press deadline.

MasterCard UK is hosting the Priceless London benefits across the city.

Perks for the people

MasterCard’s Priceless London initiative in association with Harrods Rewards membership is offering four categories of perks for users of both programs.

Consumers who use a MasterCard and Harrods Rewards can book The Ultimate Family Day Out on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays in the summer. During this time, they are given access to the store before the open of business.

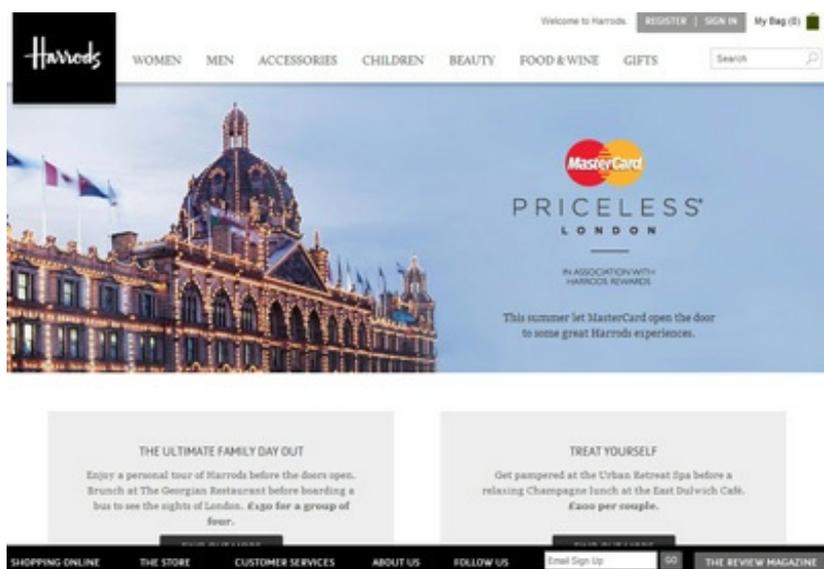
The experience is \$235 for a group of four, \$78 for each additional adult and \$39 for each additional child.

At 9 a.m., consumers can enter Harrods via door five to take an hour-long tour of the store followed by time to shop.

Brunch is served at 11 a.m. in the retailer’s Terrace Bar. Consumers receive goody bags and special eats.

In the afternoon, consumers are taken on a three-hour tour of London on a Routemaster bus to see the Changing the Guard at Buckingham Palace, the Houses of Parliament, Big Ben, the London Eye and St. Paul’s Cathedral. This is followed by a river cruise.

The experience ends at 4 p.m. when consumers are dropped off at Harrods to shop at their leisure.



Priceless London offers on Harrods.com

Additionally, Harrods Rewards and MasterCard are offering the Treat Yourself spa package in the on-site Urban Retreat space. This package is \$314 for two people.

Consumers are greeted at the door and taken up the spa where they receive two pre-selected treatments such as the Meder Spa Voyage exfoliation and hydration process, a blow dry by a top stylist, the Murad Power Pom facial, a manicure or an Indian head message.

Later on, consumers are served a Champagne lunch or afternoon tea at Harrods' East Dulwich Deli. They also receive a goody bag.

Another perk of the Priceless London program is the Beat the Queue packages at two of Harrods' on-site restaurants. Consumers who make a reservation at The Diner or The Georgian receive a complimentary glass of Champagne and dessert with the purchase of two main courses.

The Diner is a family-friendly, United States-inspired restaurant on the fourth floor of Harrods. The Priceless London benefits are available Monday-Friday.

At The Georgian, consumers can choose to eat lunch in an upscale setting and receive the MasterCard perks noon-3:30 p.m. each day.

There are reserved tables at these two restaurants that are designated for MasterCard bookings and will feature special table settings.

Lastly, consumers who spend \$117 on in-store purchases with their MasterCard will receive a 10 percent discount at the second-floor Harrods Gift Store.

Harrods and MasterCard are cross-promoting the Priceless London program on their Web sites and likely to their consumer lists via email.



Harrods Priceless London section of MasterCard.co.uk.

Good credit

A few luxury brands, mostly in the travel sector, are aligning with credit card companies to increase brand awareness and loyalty.

For example, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is partnering with Chase Card Services to introduce the Fairmont Visa Signature Card that offers cardholders exclusive perks and rewards while traveling and staying at branded properties.

Cardholders are also given complimentary upgrades to loyalty programs and personalized service the more they stay at Fairmont hotels ([see story](#)).

In addition, Ritz-Carlton Hotel Co. is extending the reach of its rewards program by

offering Chase Sapphire Preferred cardholders the opportunity to exchange card points for Ritz-Carlton Rewards points, which can be used for hotel stays at any brand property and 3,400 partner hotels.

Chase cardholders can equally transfer points from the Chase Ultimate Rewards Program to a joint Ritz-Carlton Rewards account ([see story](#)).

These brands use credit card partnerships as a cost-effective way to market the brand.

“Every luxury retailer has to create events that keep the brand positioned in consumers' minds,” Mr. Ries said. “Advertising alone is not enough as it is too expensive and less effective than it used to be.

“Events like this one are an economical way to reach potential customers,” he said.

Harrods is participating in Priceless London likely because its vaunted values of exclusivity and top service are said to align with MasterCard's program.

The retailer will benefit with the cross exposure among MasterCard users and, like hotel brands, will be able to raise awareness of its services to a broader audience.

“The positive word-of-mouth could be very helpful for the Harrods brand,” Mr. Ries said. “Almost everyone who takes the tour and has lunch at the store will be likely to tell their friends and relatives about their experiences.

“Actually, word-of-mouth is what builds most brands, but you need to do something to get the first mouth moving,” he said. “This seems to be a good way to do that.”

Final Take

Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York