

IN-STORE

Ritz-Carlton Washington boosts bookings with National Cherry Blossom Festival offers

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By ERIN SHEA

The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC, is increasing bookings during the annual National Cherry Blossom Festival with themed packages such as one that features a guest-sponsored tree in the National Forest.

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The hotel is offering two different packages for guests to experience the festival and the 101st anniversary of the gift of the blossoming cherry trees from Japan. In addition, the property also created its own scent inspired by the trees that is being used in candles, oil diffusers and room spray.

“The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC's, goal with the creation of these unique, special-access packages is to help the guest take away a great memory of their experience,” said Elizabeth Mullins, area vice president and general manager at the [Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC](#).

“We offer countless ways to make these memorable experiences through creative packages like the Cherry Blossom package with true insider access and knowledge here in DC,” she said.

In bloom

The National Cherry Blossom Festival happens on an annual basis to celebrate the gift of 3,000 cherry trees to the United States from Japan in 1912.

Ritz-Carlton, Washington, has created packages for guests to experience the trees in bloom.

The Sakura package includes suite accommodations, a four-course cherry-inspired dinner for two on the suite's terrace, a chauffeured tour of the cherry blossoms in a luxury sedan and a special cherry blossom pastry amenity prepared by the hotel's executive pastry chef. It is priced at \$3,500 per night and available March 20 – April 14.

Also available is the Cherry Blossom Give-A-Tree package that includes accommodation in a deluxe guestroom, a special cherry blossom pastry, breakfast for two in the hotel's restaurant and a National Cherry Blossom Give-A-Tree Card where the National Arbor Day Foundation will plant a tree in the National Forest for each one.

The Give-A-Tree package is part of the Ritz-Carlton's corporate program called Community Footprints that encourages its properties to practice social and environmental responsibility in their local communities.

In addition, the property has created its own scent called "Sakura," which is the word for cherry blossom in Japanese.

The scent will be used in candles, oil diffusers and room spray that are available for purchase at the hotel upon request.



Sakura candle

Guests who buy the Sakura package will receive a special amenity featuring the custom scent in a candle, reed diffuser and room spray.

"Studies have repeatedly shown that our sense of smell is directly linked to our memories and emotions, which is why we thought it was important to create our own signature scent," Ms. Mullins said. "One that is inspired by the hotel's ambience and a scent that a guest can associate with their experience at our hotel."

Location, location, location

The location of the hotel in downtown Washington has been leveraged via hotel packages in the past, especially during the 2012 election.

For instance, Ritz-Carlton, Washington, DC, tapped into a patriotic streak by offering a presidential election-themed cocktail menu that paid homage to President Barack Obama and Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney ([see story](#)).

Also, the property encouraged politically-minded ultra-affluent consumers to experience the 2013 Presidential Inauguration through a hotel package priced at \$100,000.

The “Access Washington” hotel package offered a behind-the-scenes look into the inauguration events in Washington. The package was certainly tailored for wealthy consumers who seek experiences that the general public does not have access ([see story](#)).

The National Cherry Blossom Festival packages allow guests to become engaged in the nation’s capital and give back to the community.

“We believe our hotel should be aligned with the issues that are important to the community where we operate, and strive to make a difference to better the environment through native plant restoration projects, such as replacing Cherry Blossom trees and protecting endangered native species,” Ms. Mullins said.

Final take

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