

IN-STORE

Do luxury hotels need to offer more adventure?

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By ERIN SHEA

Luxury hotels should cater to today's younger, more adventurous affluent traveler who is seeking exotic locations and packages to be immersed in new cultures.

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Many luxury hotels are offering more culture-focused packages that allow guests to celebrate and experience the local flavor while staying at a luxury property. With this trend increasing across global markets, more hotels should aim to please this adventurous group.

“The luxury travel market will always have the typical affluent traveler who wants the best services and amenities in the typical tourist destinations like New York, Paris, Tokyo and Sydney,” said D.M. Banks, director at [DMB Public Relations](#), New York.

“However, the luxury travel market is also changing in many ways with many affluent travelers being younger and more adventurous,” he said.

“Additionally, with the technology we all have at our fingertips, affluent travelers are more familiar with every corner of the world, and can research all the possibilities in terms of adventure and exploration before they arrive to their destination.”

New hot spots

Adventurous travel can help create special memories, which is what luxury hotels strive to provide for guests.

“At their core, people are looking for memories,” said Taylor Rains, account coordinator at [Rawle Murdy Associates](#), Charleston, SC.

“The desire for adventure and experiential travel has grown out of a shift in the way people value their time,” he said. “I do not see this trend disappearing anytime soon.

“The average traveler is now looking for more adventure and experience out of a vacation, and across the board, less active vacations continue to drop in popularity, while those including some form of outdoor activity now account for nearly half of all trips taken.”

These affluent travelers are also looking for new travel destinations that will give them a unique experience not widely available to consumers.

“Always looking for the next ‘it’ destination, the affluent traveler is not afraid to go off the beaten path to experience something unique,” DMB Public Relations’ Mr. Banks said.

“Often, these hidden hideaways today offer all the luxuries and amenities while still providing the extreme exploration options for the traveler hungry for adventure,” he said.

In addition to finding new destinations, these affluent travelers are looking for the most desirable activities.

“Luxury travelers are looking for more, with 94 percent saying that they are looking for something new and different from hotels and hospitality, according to the International Luxury Travel Market,” Rawle Murdy’s Mr. Rains said.

“Crafting unique, memorable and experience-driven travel packages is one way for luxury hotel brands to do just that,” he said.

New era of travel

Luxury hotels are beginning to offer packages specifically for the adventurous affluent traveler.

For instance, the Peninsula Bangkok engaged guests in native cultural activities to celebrate Thailand’s Songkran Festival April 10-17.

The package offered various activities for guests to get immersed in cultural experiences and festivities surrounding the Thai holiday. This package likely lured adventurous travelers to the property who are looking to celebrate the holiday and explore the local flavor ([see story](#)).



Songkran festival at the Peninsula Bangkok

Also, luxury hotels are investing in locations that were not always considered luxury travel destinations.

Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, Hilton Hotels' Waldorf Astoria and The Ritz-Carlton have recently opened or plan to open new properties in the Middle East.

New luxury hotels in this area should prepare for a variety of affluent guests with the influx of business and leisure travelers ([see story](#)).

Since luxury travelers are looking for exclusive and unique packages, more hotels should cater to those who want an adventurous, but still luxurious, vacation.

"Luxury travelers want one-of-kind getaways and more luxury hotels are recognizing the importance of providing their guests with something completely unique," said Tiffany Dowd, luxury hotel inspector and president of [Luxe Social Media](#), Boston.

"It is no longer just about a great hotel stay, it is about integrating into local culture to experience something new," she said.

"Luxury travelers are seeking out more exotic experiences and hotels can benefit by offering packages that provide personalization, spontaneity and adventure."

Final take

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