

INTERNET

Luxury Collection highlights concierge knowledge via Certified Indigenous initiative

September 11, 2013



By JOE MCCARTHY

Starwood Hotels and Resorts' The Luxury Collection is leveraging the knowledge of its global concierge team with a new storytelling initiative that explores remote and culturally-rich information about certain regions.

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The "Certified Indigenous" series provides the concierge team with an opportunity to share travel secrets and impart advice on essential places to visit. Showcasing the expertise of a concierge team on social media will allow hotel brands to infuse everyday promotional efforts with the gravity of a property's heritage.

"We know that our guests are looking for personalized experiences and Starwood is laser-focused on delivering this – consistently around the world - through three distinct brand propositions: W, St. Regis and The Luxury Collection," said Paul James, global brand leader for [The Luxury Collection](#), New York.

"With 85 percent of Starwood's luxury guests hailing from generations X and Y, a cadre we refer to as Generation LuXurY, we know their approach to luxury is decidedly different than their predecessors," he said.

"They are looking for the exceptional, the authentic and the local – which, not coincidentally, are among the core values of The Luxury Collection brand."

Experts on call

The Certified Indigenous series demonstrates the involvement of a property's concierge team in the local culture by their ability to share insights that elevate a guest's stay.

For the ITC Kakatiya, Hyderabad, India property, the chief concierge elaborates on the arts and crafts village called Shilparamam. This village was established in 1992 and displays work such as sculpture, woodwork, textiles and pottery from artisans all around the country.



Shilparamam, India

The chief concierge for the Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens describes the Changing of the Evzone Guard. Dating back to 1867, the Evzone Guard contains only the most immaculate individuals who may never leave their post unless instructed by an officer.



Hotel Grande Bretagne, Athens

A enormous, century-old ficus called a Moreton Bay Fig tree is described by the chief

concierge at the brand's San Diego property.

Ondel-ondel is a 10-foot tall, colorful puppet that performs regularly at Kampung Betawi, Indonesia near the Keraton at The Plaza, Jakarta. In this article, the chief concierge describes his affinity for these performances that have occurred since his childhood.

Other articles in the series discuss the London and San Sebastian, Puerto Rico properties.

The series can be accessed at: <http://www.luxurycollectioncertifiedindigenous.com/>.

The brand also promotes travel tips on its social media pages.



Travel Tip: Don't miss a sunset camel trek complete with champagne at Al Maha Desert Resort & Spa #TravelTuesday



Luxury Collection's Facebook page

Certifying a trip

The Luxury Collection has previously laced packages with local culture.

For instance, the Luxury Collection partnered with One Kings Lane, purveyor of vintage home decor, to tailor customized experiences and unearth the local treasures of property locations for guests.

The partnership offered exclusive sales, dinners and opportunities to road-trip across some of America's quintessential landscapes. San Diego, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Portland composed the showcased itinerary and at each of these locations guests encountered a distinct cultural flavor ([see story](#)).

Other luxury hotel brands recognize the integral role the concierge team should play in promotional efforts.

For example, Trump Hotel SoHo, New York, is leveraging the knowledge of its concierge team with weekly local insights on the hotel's Facebook page to remind guests of this valuable in-house resource.

The "Concierge Corner with Eric" features a range of themes and offers suggestions on places to dine, choice cocktails and activities to engage in. Visibly incorporating the concierge team in social media interactions can help provide guests with hotel-inspired suggestions ([see story](#)).

Perhaps the largest obstacle for brands seeking to leverage concierge knowledge in a technology-forward manner is the proliferation of instantly accessed information that purports to deliver "certified" information.

"Today guests can pull any piece of information on their smart phones in seconds, so the role of a great concierge has shifted from transactional to interactional," said Mr. James.

"Technology is a tool, but it is our hotel teams – at Luxury Collection hotels, led by our concierges – that deliver a great guest experience personalized for their needs," he said.

Final take

Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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