

INTERNET

## Bulgari Hotels boosts Russian awareness via VK account

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*Bulgari Hotel & Residence, London's lobby*

By JEN KING

Italian jeweler Bulgari is using its London hotel and residence property to introduce its newly created account on popular Russian language social networking site VK.

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**Luxury Daily**

As the second largest social networking site after Facebook, VK will likely drive interest in Bulgari Hotels. Although VK has three official languages, English, Russian and Ukrainian, the site also has over 70 unofficial languages that will only help to increase Bulgari Hotels' exposure and possibly bookings.

"Social platforms have distinct benefits and understanding the differences and audiences is key," said Tiffany Dowd, founder and president of [Luxe Social Media](#), Boston.

"Hotel brands should maintain a presence on several top social sites to drive exposure to these different audiences with timely, interesting and engaging content," she said.

"Bulgari Hotels recognizes that to have an even stronger global brand presence, it needs to act locally by targeting the growing numbers of affluent Russians that actively use VK. This can benefit its hotels by driving awareness and interest in the hotels and perhaps inspire future stays at one of its luxury hotels"

Ms. Dowd is not affiliated with Bulgari Hotel & Resorts, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Bulgari Hotels & Resorts was unable to respond by press deadline.

### Social expansion

On Facebook, the jeweler's hotelier arm announced its VK account April 24 as a new "social source of inspiration" where consumers can discover Bulgari's hotels.



There is a brand new social source of inspiration where to discover the unique style of the Bulgari properties. Follow our famed Italian luxury also on vk -  
<http://vk.com/bulgarihotels>



*Bulgari Hotel & Residences, London's Facebook post about VK*

Bulgari likely opted to promote the new VK account through its London property because of the many Russian travelers that frequent the city. Similar to Chinese consumers, Russians travel and shop abroad in large numbers.

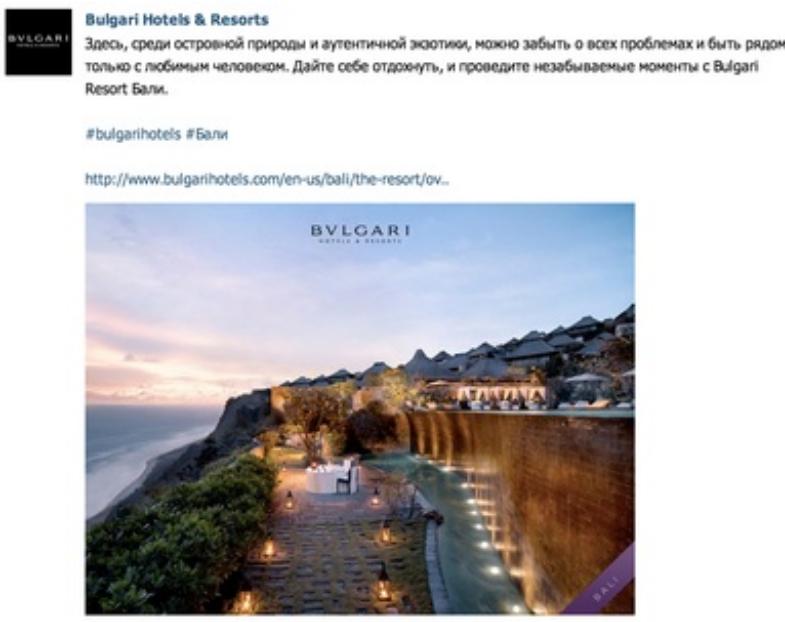
In Britain, Russia trails only China and the Middle East in terms of tax-free spending ([see story](#)).

A click-through on the provided link lands on Bulgari Hotels & Resorts' official VK page. A brief description lists its opened properties in Milan, Bali, London, Tokyo and Osaka and includes a link to the brand's hotel Web site.

### *Bulgari Hotels & Resorts homepage on VK, in Russian*

As of press time, Bulgari has posted to VK 35 times since its opening post on March 24. Posting range by property and include aspects of the hotels such as dining options, spa accommodations, shopping and grounds.

For example, to promote the Bali property's landscape the brand posted an image of cliff-side dining at dusk. While on April 3, for instance, Bulgari included a post to VK about the London properties' high tea service and on April 19, the brand posted an image of a chocolate "jewel" created at the Tokyo hotel.



### *Bulgari's Mali hotel property on VK*

Additional posts take VK users through various experiences such as Milan's gardens, London's cigar room and Bali's spa retreat.

Emphasis is also placed on Bulgari Hotels & Resorts popularity and achievements. Bulgari posted Condé Nast Traveler's article that nominated the hotel Top 5 City Hotel in Milan as well as a link to an article about the London property being awarded the 2013

BREEAM award for being environmentally efficient.



### *Condé Nast Traveler post on VK*

As of press time, Bulgari Hotels & Resorts has active social accounts on Facebook, Google+, Pinterest and now VK.

Breaking down the language barrier

To ensure that native speakers tune, brand's have to curate region-specific content with fluid translations.

Of the 55 percent of luxury brands that offer Russian Web sites only 14 percent of brands offer Web sites with advanced Russian translation, according to a report from L2 Think Tank.

The Digital IQ Index: Russia Prestige found that many luxury marketers are not providing translated content for these consumers via digital media. Even though luxury brands have a global presence, it is important to also provide local and language-familiar content to consumers around the world.

Bulgari Hotels & Resorts will likely benefit and see an increased interest from Russia consumers since the introduction of its VK to the platforms 44 million users. L2's data showed that brands with a strong following on Russian social media platform VK will likely saw more success in the market ([see story](#)).

Other brands have looked to popular social networking sites as a means of introduction.

For instance, London department store Harrods increased its exposure in China by being the first British retailer to launch a WeChat social media account that conveys its latest content and special offers to Chinese consumers. Harrods built off the success of its Weibo blog to reach more consumers as China continues to be a power player in the luxury market ([see story](#)).

Through the use of local social media platforms, brands and retailers are able to appeal to local sensibilities

"The presence on VK can only help increase the exposure of Bulgari as a global brand by

targeting its consumers locally in the Russian language," Ms. Dowd said.

### Final Take

*Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/RnQH30HeY4](https://www.youtube.com/embed/RnQH30HeY4)

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