



THE CULTURED BRAND OF DISCOVERY ATMOSPHERE AS A SPRINGBOARD

LE MERIDIEN - A LIFESTYLE BRAND

Mixing contemporary culture with European heritage, Le Méridien is committed to providing an interactive and culturally enriching experience to its guests. A favorite among progressive, forward-thinking international travelers, Le Méridien shares with its guests a passion for style, art, architecture, design, cuisine and fashion. Through an array of partnerships with leading-edge artists and cultural institutions, Le Méridien provides a platform for stimulating experiences and discovery for the creative guest interested in exploring the modern culture of each destination. In its commitment to deliver relevant experiences that emotionally connect with its guest, Le Méridien is forging partnerships with cultural institutions around the globe, targeting the creative guest to bring alive the newly defined brand positioning of CHIC, CULTURED, DISCOVERY, in a credible and authentic way.

JOURNEY BEGINS

Originally founded by Air France in Paris in 1972, Le Méridien boasts a storied 35-year history. In the early days, Le Méridien was associated with sophistication and innovation, quickly growing in some of the world's primary and international cities, as well as exotic resort locales. By the early 1990s, Le Méridien became a target for acquisition, and following a decade of varying ownership, the brand was acquired in November 2005 by Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc., one of the world's leading hotel and leisure companies.

With its significant footprint in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia-Pacific, Le Méridien's distribution was a perfect complement to the Starwood portfolio. With 120 upper-upscale hotels and resorts in such dynamic destinations as Nice, Dubai, Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Budapest, Le Méridien provided Starwood new presence in markets where it had been under-represented or absent. Not only did the acquisition solidify Starwood's position as the most global upper-upscale and luxury hotel company in the world, it also provided a new platform for growth, with plans to expand Le Méridien in North America and Latin America where the brand has limited distribution.

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A CURATED EXPERIENCE FOR THE CREATIVE GUEST

Le Méridien is currently unveiling a series of brand-defining initiatives, partnerships and artistic events that signal a fresh approach aimed at attracting the world's creative class. Central to forging partnerships between the brand and a variety of cultural institutions and internationally acclaimed artists is Jérôme Sans, Le Méridien's Cultural Curator, who was appointed in June 2006. Sans is the co-founder of the acclaimed Palais de Tokyo in Paris and a highly regarded cult figure within the international art world. Sans is actively engaging emerging and celebrated artists who will bring their expertise in art, architecture, design, cuisine and fashion to Le Méridien's guest experience, and share their visions with hotel guests and local communities across the globe.

TRANSFORMING THE ARRIVAL

The brand's new initiatives will be felt immediately upon entering Le Méridien properties. They intend to transform the currently functional and transactional experience into an emotional connection. Upon entering the hotel, a visual and audio effect – a "wall" of sound and art - will engulf each guest. The experience will create a change in mood for guests and signify their entrance into a new environment. Customized to match each hotel's distinctive architecture, style and location, these innovative transitional portals cue guests to open their minds to new experiences. Le Méridien creates further intrigue with its unique, sensorial environment by integrating light, sound and scent in the public space.

Once through the transitional portal, guests will be enveloped with Le Méridien's signature scent, sound and use of light. Global lighting leader Philips Lighting Company has been appointed to work with Le Méridien brand worldwide on the lighting components that evoke a sense of warmth or drama depending on the time of the day and occasion.

Le Labo, the innovative and leading-edge perfume house, has developed a signature scent for Le Méridien – LMO1™, an "olfactory" statement that is based on the brand's values. This exclusive, custom scent will complete the customer experience by engaging memory and emotions through the sense of smell.

ELEVATED EXPERIENCE

Le Méridien has appointed Henri Scars Struck, the visionary Grammy-winning French composer and producer, to create the Elevated Experience for Le Méridien hotels globally. Le Méridien will transform the expected and predictable event of riding an elevator into an "elevating experience" through video and sound. Based in New York, Henri Scars Struck has been at the forefront of music and media production for over 15 years and has worked with acclaimed talent including Yves Saint Laurent, No Doubt, Madonna and Alicia Keys.

UNLOCK ART™

At check-in, guests will receive a room key that unlocks more than just a room – it opens the guest's mind. The key is a work of art itself, which is launched in several limited editions within a year and is intended to become a collector's item over the years. The artist-designed key card unlocks a local contemporary cultural experience and becomes part of the curated collection of works that Le Méridien features throughout the guest experience. This innovative program, to roll out globally in 2008, provides guests with direct access to a variety of progressive, modern and independent cultural centers including The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Shanghai, Yerba Buena Centre for the Arts in San Francisco, and Secession in Vienna.

COFFEE CULTURE

A focal point for Le Méridien, coffee is the drink of choice for the creative guest. Le Méridien recognizes that European café society has shaped and inspired myriad artists and writers through the years, recently launched its marketing partnership with illycafé and the 50 Beans, 50 Words initiative. Just as every cup of illy coffee is created from 50 perfect beans, a 50-word short story is also an intense and delightful experience. Le Méridien is challenging their guests with creating a 50-word story which will be published on the brand's website. Highlighting their passion for art and design, shared by Le Méridien and illy, each cup of coffee is served in an artist-designed cup.

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SIGNATURE EVENTS

Some of the most spectacular artistic experiences offered by Le Méridien are its signature FIRST NIGHTSM and ONE NIGHTSM events. In October 2007, Le Méridien launched ONE NIGHT – a series of signature events in existing properties worldwide, designed to illustrate the brand's new positioning. This global event initiative follows FIRST NIGHT, an original event series designed for new Le Méridien hotels worldwide to showcase the new face of Le Méridien since it was acquired by Starwood. FIRST NIGHT events took place at Le Méridien San Francisco (November 2006) and Le Royal Méridien Shanghai (December 2006).

Le Méridien signature events engage opinion leaders, guests and local residents in stimulating, interactive cultural experiences. FIRST NIGHT San Francisco, conceptualized and designed by an acclaimed lighting artist Thierry Dreyfus, featured an extraordinary installation of light that transformed the hotel into a work of art. Dreyfus re-imagined Le Méridien through his colorful reinterpretation of the building's exterior by projecting Mondrian-like illuminations. At Le Royal Méridien, Shanghai, five light cannons gently pulsed red beams into the sky, illuminating the skyline and establishing the hotel as the "heartbeat of Shanghai." These two events signaled the kickoff of the relaunch of Le Méridien and its new brand direction. Future FIRST NIGHT events are planned to celebrate new hotel openings in cities around the world, including Bangkok in 2008. Le Méridien plans on extending the ONE NIGHT event series to Asia-Pacific and the Middle East in 2008, with celebrations in Dubai and Shanghai.

STARWOOD PREFERRED GUEST®

Le Méridien, like all Starwood brands, is proud to offer the Starwood Preferred Guest program, which made headlines when it launched in 1999 with a breakthrough policy of no blackout dates and no capacity controls. Allowing guests to redeem points for Free Night Awards anytime, at over 825 participating properties worldwide, SPG "ratchets up the stakes in the hotel loyalty-program game," according to The Wall Street Journal. SPG has offered members the ability to redeem awards at more resorts, more luxury properties, more European hotels and more golf properties than any other hotel program.

THE NEXT FRONTIER

The brand's plans call for continued expansion thoughtfully in key European markets where the brand does not yet have a foothold, including St. Petersburg and Prague, where Le Méridien will open properties in the coming years. Other destinations in the pipeline include locations in Morocco, South Africa, and Egypt. Le Méridien is also looking to strengthen its resort portfolio with several new resorts in traditional leisure locales in the United States and Canada, where Le Méridien currently has five hotels, expansion plans are focused on major gateway cities and alternative markets catering to creative professionals. The brand's European caché and unique point of view make it attractive to developers looking for alternatives to more established American brands. The pipeline of Le Méridien hotels in Asia-Pacific has a focus on city centre hotels and resorts in leisure destinations to complement the brand's resort stronghold in Southeast Asia.

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Members of the press: Please contact Starwood's toll-free media hotline at (866) 4-STAR-PR (866-478-2777) for photography or additional information.