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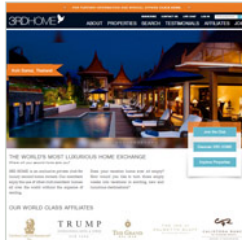
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3rd Home revamps digital member experience via site resign

By Tricia Carr

March 4, 2013



Private luxury vacation home exchange club 3rd Home is revamping its digital strategy through a new Web site that offers members enhanced images and uncensored reviews.

The exclusive club allows its members to exchange vacation homes without limitations such as direct trades and fixed dates. Members can view potential properties in-depth on the new site.

"In this newest iteration of our Web site, we upgraded the appearance to make it in keeping with other luxury categories, and enhanced the visibility of the properties and unedited reviews themselves. which is the No. 1 selling point of any hospitality program," said Steve Zacks, chief marketing officer of 3rd Home, Nashville, TN.

3rd Home's private network consists of 1,100 members and 1,350 properties. Affiliate brands include The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Vail, CO; The Ritz-Carlton Residences, Singer Island, Palm Beach, FL; and Trump International Hotel & Tower, New York.

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New home on the Web

The 3rd Home Web site allows members to browse available homes and book their stay.

The company strictly allows secondary, furnished homes to be listed on the site.

When members submit weeks in their homes via the site, they receive 3rd Home Keys that act as currency to spend toward other available homes.

Members can browse a listing of available homes on the properties section of the site. The listing can be arranged manually by listing date, availability, price in 3rd Home Keys and number of bedrooms.

The Search section of the site contains a map so that members can click the area of the world to which they wish to travel. In the United States, members can narrow down their search by clicking a region on the map.

Members can also narrow down their search by home setting such as beach, city, mountain, country and desert or nearby entertainment categories such as ski, golf, fish, hike, equine, shop, wine and arts.

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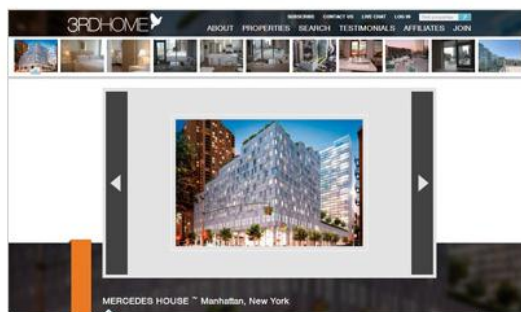
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Search section

Each property listing contains numerous images of different parts of the vacation home or apartment, a detailed description including nearby activities and popular landmarks, a simplified list of specifications such as the number of bedrooms and amenities, and reviews, if available.

Members can reserve the property, find the property on a map, check the current weather via Wunderground.com and check for flights via Kayak.com.



Listing

"The luxury consumer likes to be in control, choosing what they want, when they want it," Mr. Zacks said. "With 3rd Home, he or she is able to explore all the properties available and make a reservation day or night by literally pushing a button."

Goal-oriented

Luxury travel marketers have updated their Web sites recently with different goals in mind.

For example, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group relaunched its Web site in October to enhance the brand experience and increase the amount of time that consumers spend with the brand online.

The site boasts a new layout, informative content, personalization and price matching. There are also more functions available on the brand's lifestyle blog, Destination MO ([see story](#)).

In contrast, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts rolled out updates to its desktop site that same month so that its features are optimized and touch-enabled for tablet devices.

The hotel brand saw an increase in tablet usage – up more than 300 percent this year – as well as an increase in time spent on its sites. Therefore, Fairmont catered to the digital habits of its customers through digital renovations ([see story](#)).

3rd Home is looking to draw new members and brand partners through its fresh Web site.

"We rely on three different types of relationships and expect each will gain," Mr. Zacks said. "First, the luxury second homeowner will respond favorably, and we will add to our 1,100 members.

"Second, we will be able to add to our great list of affiliate relationships, which already includes Auberge, Trump, Reef Atlantis and many others," he said. "Finally, we create more partnerships with luxury brands that market to the same consumer."

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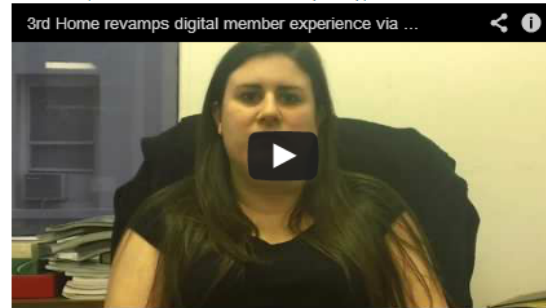
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Final Take

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Tricia Carr is an editorial assistant on Luxury Daily. Her beats are apparel and accessories, arts and entertainment, education, food and beverage, fragrance and personal care, government, healthcare, home furnishings, jewelry, legal/privacy and nonprofits. Reach her at tricia@napean.com.

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