

How Luxury Hotels Are Dealing With the Coronavirus Pandemic

Leading properties around the world are giving back to their communities and taking those of us stuck at home on virtual trips

By Laura Itzkowitz
April 22, 2020

In the span of a week, the Wythe Hotel in Brooklyn went from half full to completely empty. "We ran the restaurant with 50% capacity for a couple of days and then we ran a take-out program for a couple of days, and then pretty collectively we just decided the right thing to do was to have as many people as possible not interacting. And so the restaurant got shut down; the hotel went onto a skeleton crew and stayed that way until we figured out a way to actually be helpful," Peter Lawrence, the hotel's co-owner and general manager, tells *AD*.

Like countless hoteliers around the world, he has been dealing with canceled reservations, lost revenue, and the anxiety of not knowing how long the coronavirus pandemic will wreak havoc on the world. Yet at a time when it would be easy to panic about his bottom line, Lawrence and his partners decided to step up and do something to make a difference. When they heard about nurses sleeping in their cars after 18-hour shifts because home was too far or they were afraid to infect their families, they decided to help by offering rooms for free. The hotel is currently hosting about 30 doctors and nurses who need a safe place to self-isolate, and executive chef Aiden O'Neal and a small team are making 40 lunches per day for the medical professionals at Woodhull Hospital.

Taking Homebound Travelers on Virtual Trips



Vik Retreats is featuring videos by the artists whose work is exhibited at its new hotel Galleria Vik Milano via Instagram. Photo: Courtesy of Vik Retreats

Carrie and Alex Vik, the husband-and-wife team behind the art-focused Vik Retreats in Uruguay, Chile, and Milan, are featuring videos by the artists whose work is exhibited at their new hotel [Galleria Vik Milano](#) on the hotel's Instagram account. They're also offering free virtual yoga classes in collaboration with the Shack Yoga, which recently opened an outpost at [Bahia Vik](#) in José Ignacio. For those missing their spring break trip to the Magic City, [EAST, Miami](#) has created downloadable Zoom backgrounds that transport you to the hotel. Though some hotels, such as the [Resort at Paws Up](#), a luxury dude ranch in Montana, are currently open, it's best to stick to virtual travel for now.