

# Forbes

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## The X-Factor: Why It's All About The Collaboration For The Coolest Luxury Hotels

By Angelina Villa-Clarke

The stars of the catwalks have long been in bed ('scuse the pun) with luxury hotels. From Armani to Versace, some of the globe's best-loved hotels – found in the glitziest locations, of course, – have a fashion designer's name over their doors.



A daytime view of the atrium entrance to The Mark Hotel, NYC

While its not spearheaded by a brand, The Mark Hotel found in New York's Upper East Side, is nonetheless the Queen of collaborations. From its bespoke bicycles by Republic (complete with striped chain case and monogrammed bells) to its complimentary shoeshine kiosk by John Lobb – the hotel is no stranger to cosying up with a starry name or two. There's a Frédéric Fekkai hair salon, and a fitness centre which offers personal training by celebrated martial arts experts Punch, plus the hotel has long partnered with Bergdorf Goodman to offer guests exclusive round-the-clock shopping (take one of the hotel's monochrome pedicabs to get there).

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/angelinavillaclarke/2017/12/18/the-x-factor-why-its-all-about-the-collaboration-for-the-coolest-luxury-hotels/#3a082dc41c51>



Hotel shopping has never been so cool

Perfect for winter (and making for the ultimate hotel gift) is its latest luxury tie-in with cashmere supremos *Lingua Franca*. Designed especially for the Manhattan institution are the brand's signature cozy sweaters emblazoned with "Wish You Were Here" slogans.

The New York-centric brand (all its pieces are hand-embroidered in the city) was launched last year and its cashmere jumpers, with added cool-factor, have fast become a 'must have' for the city's fashion-savvy brood. Founder Rachelle Hruska MacPherson knows that the only thing better than a great cashmere sweater is one with a bit of personality. Her brand's knits feature loop-de-loop stitches that spell out hashtag-able phrases like "The Future Is Female" and "Resist."



Cosy up in The Mark with Lingua Franca

“The Mark hotel will always hold a special place in my heart,” Hruska MacPherson explains. “It was our home for many weeks following Hurricane Sandy (our house’s first floor in the West Village was flooded) so I was thrilled to be able to do a collaboration together.”

Those not able to regularly check-in need not worry about getting their hands on the goodies, for in the New Year, The Mark will be launching an e-commerce site, displaying the sweaters alongside other luxury brand collabs. For now, the Lingua Franca Sweater, \$380, can be purchased via the concierge.



The Watergate's stunning architecture

Meanwhile, wearing its collaboration status on its sleeves (literally) is Washington's notorious The Watergate Hotel, which this year celebrates its 50th anniversary. When it originally opened in 1967, the property made waves with its groundbreaking contemporary style. Its recent major refurb, under the direction of world-renowned designer Ron Arad, has a classic elegance and bold mid-century modern design, to complement the flowing, avant-garde architecture.

To add a finishing touch, the hotel has enlisted the talents of award-winning costume designer Janie Bryant (who is celebrated for creating the glamorous 1960's looks on AMC's hit television series *Mad Men*), to design a new uniform collection.

***Themarkhotel.com***





(Credit: Ron Blunt)

### *The Watergate Hotel's standout lobby*

Janie Bryant's first hospitality collection will include a range of sophisticated uniforms for associates of the hotel's dining venues, opulent whisky bar and palatial rooftop, which offers stunning 360-degree views of the Potomac River and the city's landmarks. Deriving inspiration from vintage photos of the hotel as well as her own expertise, the result is an evocative collection that complements the bold, mid-century modern design and mystique that lies behind The Watergate Hotel's unique architecture.

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A palette of gold, camel, black, grey and red will permeate the collection. Female whisky bar servers will wear grey and red windowpane sheath dresses, while male counterparts have four-button, windowpane-patterned suits. Female concierge and front desk staff will be outfitted in A-line shaped dresses in the Watergate's signature check pattern, and doormen will greet guests in a black topcoat and pants with gold camel piping.

*thewatergatehotel.com*



(Credit: Halekulani)

*Halekulani's famous mosaic pool*

Your guide to luxury travel—and life's other indulgences.

Finally, this month **Halekaulani** in Honolulu, Hawaii, a heritage hotel which opened in 1917, is raising a glass to its 100 years of history. Its new **Legacy Collection of Spirits** has been developed exclusively for the hotel by two prominent, family-owned brands – **Delamain Cognac** and **Heaven Hill Bourbon**.





(Credit: Halekulani)

### *The new Bourbon*

The first release is a limited edition Cognac from the House of Delamain. The Halekulani-labeled Cognac, was inspired by an age-old label found in records dating back to 1917. Appropriately named “*Digne du Paradis*,” (or House Befitting Heaven) as the hotel is traditionally referred to, it bears the 100th anniversary etched logo of the Halekulani.

Furthermore, it has also launched a hand-selected barrel of bourbon from the Heaven Hill Distillery. Also inspired by the archives, this time of the Heaven Hill Distillery where a circa 1960s bottle of Halekulani Bourbon was discovered, the new blend involves the fractional blending of an older and younger spirit to enhance and expand the flavour profile.



(Credit: Barbara Kraft)

### *The Halekulani at sunset*

The Hawaiian resort is renowned for its breathtaking views of Diamond Head as well as its signature mosaic pool with its orchid motif, made up of over 1.2 million individual tiles. Much loved by the fashion industry, the hotel was famous for its fashion shows in the 1950s, by lauded names such as **Dior** and **Lanvin**, and has more recently collaborated with **Vera Wang**, who personally designed The Halekulani Suite.

***Halekulani.com***