

HOTELS: CREATE YOUR OWN SOUVENIR



How much more fun would your vacations be if the hotel you stayed at helped you make souvenirs to take home? That is exactly what many hotels are doing. It is a program that was for kids but now parents and grandparents can participate as well.

The theory, according to Chekitan Dev, an associate professor at Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, is if people have happy memories of vacations, they are more likely to return and repeat their vacation. **This means loyal customers because they are creating and carrying home a constant reminder of the hotel.** His opinion is that it is great for guests who have little to show for the money they spend and better than just having a new suntan. These mementos add value by preserving memories of fun.

This idea is shared by the general manager of Viceroy Anguilla, Richard Alexander. His hotel offers an art class. He feels that guests who visit expect hotels to be more proactive in making vacations memorable. He also states that guests who visit from all over the world have many experiences. That is why his hotel offers all the best creative amenities.

Some of the creative activities that are offered by hotels now include:

- * Learning how to make cocktails at the InterContinental Montreal. For \$49 a person you will get to try three varieties of a licorice flavored drink, a picture with the professor and a bartender apron that has been signed by the bar's staff.
- * If you want to explore your inner artist, the Viceroy Anguilla gives you that chance with their island painting with a twist class. The class is guided by Lynne Bernbaum who is a modernist painter. For \$45 a person you can paint a scene from the island which you can take home to show off.
- * For the photographers, the Bacara Resort & Spa, located in Santa Barbara, teaches a weekly class called BacaraGram. For \$35, you will learn how to use photo editing software and sharing applications which will allow you to capture and share all the vacation photos you take while on a walking tour through their 78 acre resort.
- * Learn from a resident artist how to make your very own china with designs replicating famous landmarks when Jacqueline Poirier shows you how to paint it and then see it fired in the kiln. From there you can decide to ship it home or carry it with you back home. All you pay is \$25-\$50 per item for materials when you visit the Ritz-Carlton in Toronto. Daniel Newberry who is the director of sales and marketing says their guests appreciate the personalized aspects of a DIY project that they create. It is as lasting impression of their visit to the hotel.
- * Pasta is the prize in Beverly Hills at the Avalon Hotel. For \$65 Chef Mirko Paderno, from Milan, will teach you all you need to know about rolling and cutting pasta to take home and cook. The class is only offered monthly so plan your trip accordingly.
- * If your vacation plans include Charlotte's Ritz-Carlton take a cooking class for \$75 in the Cocoa Lab kitchen. You will make a dessert which you can eat immediately or save for later. Each class is different. It may include ice cream, cakes or other desserts. A spokeswoman, Bonnie Crail, says,

"It's all about doing something at the hotel rather than just sleep."

Executing editor at Hotelinteractive.com, Glenn Haussman does caution though that hotels can't just use any activity. He feels that it should be something either the guests want to learn or that will be relevant to the region.

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