



The Pfister's new augmented-reality tour guides guests through 10 of the items in the hotel's art collection via smartphone, tablet or Google Glass wearables.

120-YEAR-OLD HOTEL AUGMENTS REALITY

Marcus Hotels & Resorts' flagship property, The Pfister in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, is the first U.S. hotel to launch an augmented reality tour. The tour debuted in October for guests on smartphones, tablets and Google Glass wearables and works in conjunction with The Pfister's augmented reality app.

Participants are prompted on an interactive tour of the hotel's art collection. The experience provides a real-time, digital, full-motion tour with games, videos and other graphics.

"Anyone can sell rooms, but we are in the experience business, and augmented reality helps us add another element of discovery to the stay," explains Chris Anderson, senior vice president of sales, marketing and brand development at Marcus Hotels & Resorts. "If a guest has some sort of memorable takeaway, then we have done our job."

As augmented reality continues to gain popularity among marketers in the retail industry, Anderson believes it will become an essential tool for a brand to tell its story. "With the huge influx of Millennials in the marketplace and workplace, our definition of consumerism will be changed forever and force all hoteliers to communicate through technology," he says.

Anderson says in the first month of The Pfister's augmented reality tour, more guests viewed the hotel's art collection than in the entire fall travel season. The hotel also hopes to add additional pieces of The Pfister's art collection to the tour this year. "Eventually, this will be a very normal view of how people interact with their environment," Anderson adds.

PROGRESSIVE POWER

When it comes to energy efficiency, you don't think about the Las Vegas Strip. Nevertheless, the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino is making headlines following the property's installation of one of the largest contiguous rooftop solar photovoltaic arrays in the world.

The installation covers approximately 20 acres (8 hectares) of the Mandalay Bay Resort Conference and Convention Center's roof and uses more than 20,000 solar panels.

MGM Resorts International, which operates Mandalay Bay, partnered with solar-energy developer NRG Energy on the installation. NRG financed, constructed, owns and operates the installation, and Mandalay Bay Resort will purchase all the electricity it generates via a Power Purchase Agreement. MGM and NRG declined to share costs related to the project.

The solar panels — which typically are made of silicon-based solar cells and other common materials such as glass, aluminum and copper — use electric devices to convert light energy into electricity.

The 6.4-megawatt photovoltaic array produces enough electricity to power the equivalent of approximately 1,000 U.S. homes annually, and covers nearly 20% of the resort's power demand at peak production. There also are plans for an additional 2-megawatt installation atop a future expansion of the convention center, and once completed, the combined project is expected to displace about 6,300 metric tons of carbon dioxide — equal to taking more than 1,300 cars off the road.



A rooftop solar photovoltaic array atop the Mandalay Bay Resort Conference and Convention Center in Las Vegas uses more than 20,000 solar panels to cover nearly 20% of the resort's power demand at peak production.