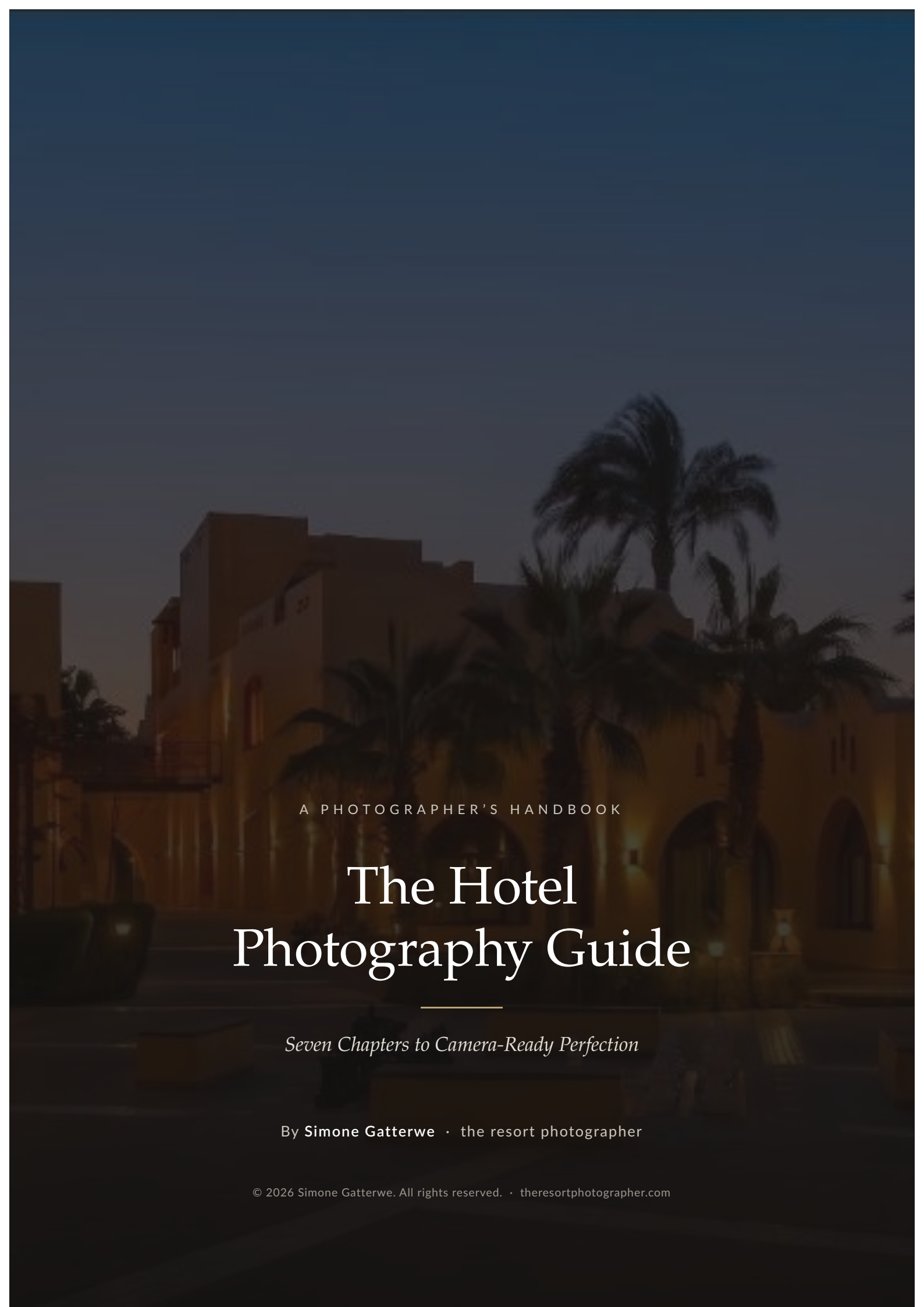




A PHOTOGRAPHER'S HANDBOOK

The Hotel Photography Guide

Seven Chapters to Camera-Ready Perfection

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This handbook accompanies the online Hotel Photography Guide at theresortphotographer.com/hotel-photography-guide/. Please share the relevant chapters with your team ahead of each photoshoot to ensure every space is presented at its absolute best.

01 The Strategic Blueprint

The Blueprint for a Successful Hotel Photoshoot

Commissioning a professional hotel photoshoot is a strategic investment in your property's future. To ensure the final images not only capture your hotel but truly elevate your brand, a seamless collaboration and meticulous preparation are required. Here are the essential principles for a flawless production:

1. Capturing the True Essence

Select a visual storyteller, not merely a technician. A compelling portfolio requires a photographer who deeply understands and connects with your property's unique narrative. If the creative eye does not feel the soul of your hotel, the resulting images will lack the emotive power required to inspire future guests.

Before the first frame is captured, take time to walk the property together and discuss what makes it distinct — the architectural details, the design intent, and the moments that define the guest experience. This shared understanding becomes the foundation of every successful shoot.



2. The Guest's Perspective

One invaluable investment is inviting the photographer to experience the property as a guest for a day or two prior to the shoot. Immersing oneself in the hospitality, the flow of the rooms, and the service unveils those subtle, luxurious details that ultimately drive bookings. It transforms a standard architectural shot into an authentic experience.

From the linen thread count to the precise placement of a welcome amenity, these are the details a photographer only discovers by living the experience firsthand — and they are the details that resonate most with guests browsing your gallery online.

3. Mastering the Light

Exceptional imagery is dictated by the sun. Allow the production the necessary time to study how natural light interacts with your architecture throughout the day. True luxury is often revealed in the quiet, fleeting moments of dawn and the soft glow of dusk. Rushing this process compromises the magic.



A single room may photograph beautifully at seven in the morning and appear flat by noon. Building the shot list around the sun's path, rather than a fixed clock, is what separates ordinary property photos from genuinely compelling imagery.

4. A Year-Round Hotel Photoshoot Strategy

Your property evolves with the seasons. Rather than one massive production, consider commissioning multiple, focused shoots throughout the year. Capturing the vibrant energy of spring and the cozy intimacy of winter ensures your marketing collateral remains dynamic and relevant year-round.

Pre-Production & On-Site Logistics

- **Strategic Scheduling.** A meticulously crafted shot list and timeline are non-negotiable. By planning each setup around optimal lighting conditions and your operational flow, the actual shoot becomes a quiet, highly productive endeavor before the team even arrives on site.
- **Designated On-Site Coordination.** Efficiency on set is paramount. Assigning a dedicated, empowered staff member to act as a liaison ensures seamless transitions, immediate access to locked areas, and rapid styling assistance, saving hours of valuable production time.
- **Casting and Compliance.** When incorporating lifestyle elements, consider your casting carefully. While professional models guarantee a certain aesthetic consistency, featuring your dedicated staff can convey profound authenticity and warmth. In all cases, securing comprehensive, signed model releases in advance is a crucial legal step to protect your brand's future usage rights, even if personnel changes occur.
- **Managing the Guest Experience.** Transparency is key. Inform your current guests about the upcoming photoshoot via a polite note in the lobby or a letter in their rooms. This prevents misunderstandings and ensures guests do not accidentally wander into the frame during complex setups.
- **The Art of Prop Styling.** A room feels alive when it looks lived-in by someone with impeccable taste. Plan for fresh, high-quality floral arrangements, perfectly plated culinary highlights, or an open book on a sunbed. These curated props are the finishing touches that transform a space from “clean” to “inviting.”



02 The Art of the Hotel Bed

Preparing Your Hotel Bed for the Camera

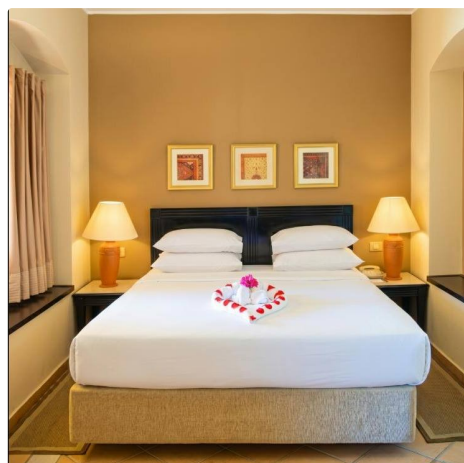
Hotel bed styling is a unique photographic challenge. The camera is an unforgiving critic, capturing far more detail and imperfection than the human eye ever perceives. Even the most elegant interior design can be undermined by a single stray thread, a misplaced crease, or a slightly uneven edge. In today's digital landscape, potential guests decide within seconds whether to book or click away; a flawless, inviting image is the single most important factor in securing that booking.

My goal is to ensure your rooms look as perfect on screen as they do in person. To help achieve this, I have compiled these guidelines to prepare your space for our photoshoot. Please consider this process a creative investment: the time spent styling is directly proportional to the impact and effectiveness of the final imagery.

1. The Bed: Our Primary Focus

The bed is the heart of every hotel room shot.

- **Precision Pressing.** Industrial laundry machines often leave deep, permanent creases. For the shoot, all bed linen and pillowcases should be steamed or ironed on-site. The goal is a crisp, smooth surface that exudes luxury.
- **The "Freshness" Factor.** Whenever possible, use brand-new linen. New fabric has a crispness and integrity that is difficult to replicate once the material has been laundered repeatedly.
- **Mastering the Fill.** While feather pillows are a delight for guests, their natural movement often creates uneven indentations and ripples on camera. I utilize professional-grade inserts and specialized padding to ensure a plump, uniform, and architectural look.
- **Structural Elegance.** Decorative pillows with borders (Oxford style) should stand proud and defined. Careful hand-shaping and light steam pressing ensures they appear voluminous without looking overly stiff.



2. Styling & Composition

Professional photography is about balance and visual storytelling.

- **Curated Details.** Every element—from the placement of a runner to the arrangement of scatter cushions—must be balanced. Together, we ensure these accents enhance, rather than clutter, the space.
- **Minimalist Sophistication.** Crisp white linen provides a timeless, high-end canvas. This is complemented with subtle, intentional details like a premium bedside lamp or a single, artfully placed floral arrangement to introduce color and form.



3. Workflow & Atmosphere

- **Time Allocation.** Quality requires patience. Please allow for at least one hour of dedicated styling time for the bed alone. This preparation ensures that the imagery does not just document a room, but crafts an inviting atmosphere.
- **Evoking Emotion.** The objective is to invite the guest into the experience. Whether capturing the room in soft, warm evening light or staging a “turndown service” moment, the focus is on imagery that triggers the guest’s imagination and turns lookers into bookers.

4. Essential Checklist for Your Team

To ensure our session is efficient and high-impact, please prepare the following in advance:

- **Functionality.** Verify that all light bulbs are working and have identical color temperatures.
- **Decluttering.** Remove all remote controls, chargers, information folders, and cleaning supplies from the frame.
- **Staging Supplies.** If you have signature amenities (e.g., a welcome fruit platter, branded slippers, or champagne), please have them ready for styling.

03 Bathroom Sanctuary

The Sanctuary: Mastering Hotel Bathroom Photography

In modern hospitality, the bathroom is no longer just a functional necessity; it is a private spa retreat. For many discerning travelers, a luxurious, immaculate bathroom is the decisive factor when booking a suite.

Capturing these spaces, however, is notoriously complex. Highly reflective surfaces, mixed lighting, and spatial constraints require absolute technical precision. Here is how we transform a challenging environment into a compelling visual invitation.

1. Styling & Preparation

Visual hygiene is paramount long before the camera is unpacked. Every bathroom we style calls for brand-new, pristine white towels — even a single wash alters the delicate texture of luxury cotton, and the lens captures every imperfection.



Once staging begins, the smallest details resurface: dust, water spots, and fingerprints on glass and chrome are magnified by the camera far beyond what the eye registers on set. After the housekeeping team finishes, we perform a meticulous final polish, because absolute brilliance is non-negotiable.

To soften the cold, hard lines of marble, glass, and granite, we then introduce subtle organic elements — a single fresh botanical piece or a set of high-end wooden amenities bring warmth and life to what can otherwise feel like a sterile environment.

2. Composition & Framing

Capturing smaller spaces demands the right optics. We rely on professional architectural lenses — typically a premium 24mm — to showcase a room's true dimensions without the unnatural, curved distortion of ultra-wide “real estate” lenses.

From there, the objective is to highlight the sanctuary itself: we deliberately compose our shots around the vanity, the walk-in shower, or the soaking tub, carefully keeping utilities like the toilet out of the primary visual narrative.

Mirrors deserve particular care. Used correctly, they can double the perceived depth of a room and reflect stunning views, but they require precise camera positioning to avoid unwanted reflections of the equipment or crew.

3. Light & the Hero Shot

Bathrooms are often a chaotic mix of warm halogens, cool LEDs, and daylight, and managing this requires advanced lighting technique. We carefully balance ambient light with precise studio strobes to ensure expensive tiles and fixtures render in their true, accurate colors.



This matters most for the single image that tends to sell a suite: a freestanding tub positioned in front of a spectacular view. These “hero” shots require careful timing — capturing the perfect natural light outside while maintaining a balanced exposure inside.

4. Atmosphere, Detail & Inclusivity

A completely dry bathroom can feel uninviting, so we introduce a deliberate element of life: partially filling the tub, adding a touch of elegant bubble bath, or capturing the shower running for a split second. If the property has a spa-like aesthetic, small additions like lit candles or beautifully arranged bath salts shift the narrative from “hotel bathroom” to wellness retreat.

We round out the story with signature details — macro shots of bespoke amenities, a monogrammed robe, or the elegant curve of a brass faucet — and we approach accessible bathrooms with the exact same high-end aesthetic and attention to detail, so every guest feels valued and inspired.

04 Culinary Excellence: F&B

Preparing Your Restaurant and Buffet for Photography

In the competitive world of hospitality, food and beverage imagery is often the deciding factor between a browser and a booker. A perfectly plated dish or an abundant, glistening buffet spread speaks directly to a guest's appetite for experience. Please share these guidelines with your culinary and service teams ahead of our shoot.

1. The Flawless Mise en Place

Precision plating separates an ordinary snapshot from an editorial-quality image. Every element on the plate should be placed with intention — sauces drizzled with control, garnishes fresh and vibrant, and portions sized for the camera rather than the table.

Cleanliness is paramount: rims should be wiped spotless, and cutlery, glassware, and linens should be pressed and free of watermarks before a single frame is captured.



2. The “Untouched” Buffet Principle

A buffet should look abundant, freshly replenished, and untouched — as if the doors have just opened. We style each station with height, color contrast, and generous quantities, avoiding gaps or half-emptied trays.

Labels, tongs, and serving utensils should be perfectly aligned, and any condensation, spills, or fingerprints on display cases must be cleared immediately before shooting.



3. Timing for Ultimate Freshness

Food photography is a race against time. Ice cream melts, garnishes wilt, and steam disappears within minutes. We coordinate closely with your kitchen so that dishes reach the set at the exact moment lighting and composition are ready.

For beverages, fresh ice, vibrant garnishes, and condensation on a chilled glass are what make an image feel alive — these details are prepared last, immediately before the shutter clicks.



4. Presenting the Culinary Team

The people behind the cuisine are part of the story. A portrait of your executive chef finishing a plate, or the sommelier presenting a bottle, adds authenticity and a human connection that pure product shots cannot achieve on their own.

05 Lobby & Bar

The Grand Arrival: Preparing Your Lobby and Bar for Photography

The lobby is the calling card of your property, setting the tone for the entire guest experience, while the bar serves as its social heart. To capture the sophistication, warmth, and architectural grandeur of these spaces, a pristine environment is essential. Please share these preparation guidelines with your front desk and food & beverage teams to ensure a flawless photoshoot:

1. Absolute Decluttering

The camera captures every distraction. To emphasize the architecture and elegance of your lobby, we must temporarily remove operational clutter.

- **Clear the Floor.** Luggage carts, stanchions (velvet ropes), wet floor signs, and temporary promotional banners must be moved entirely out of the frame.
- **The Pristine Front Desk.** Clear the reception counter of loose papers, card terminals, and office supplies. Where possible, angle computer monitors away from the camera or temporarily lower them so they do not disrupt the sleek lines of the desk.

2. Lounge Symmetry and Comfort

Seating areas should look inviting yet meticulously maintained.

- **Cushion Precision.** All sofas and armchairs must be perfectly aligned. Cushions should be freshly plumped and structured, and any decorative throws must be draped with intention.
- **Curated Surfaces.** Coffee tables should feature neatly stacked, high-end coffee table books or small, fresh floral accents, rather than outdated magazines or empty glasses.



3. The Art of the Bar

A luxury bar needs to exude atmosphere, craftsmanship, and exclusivity.

- **The Back Bar Display.** Bottles on the display shelves must be perfectly aligned with labels facing forward. Remove any half-empty or unsightly operational plastic bottles from view.
- **Immaculate Glassware.** All visible glassware must be polished to a brilliant, streak-free shine.
- **Signature Mixology.** Have your head bartender ready to prepare two or three signature cocktails precisely when the camera and lighting are set. Fresh ice, vibrant garnishes, and the condensation on a chilled glass make the image come alive.



4. Architectural and Mood Lighting

Lighting dictates the mood of these spaces.

- **Illuminate Everything.** Turn on all ambient lighting, including table lamps, wall sconces, and display lights behind the bar. Ensure all bulbs are functioning and match in color temperature.
- **The Hearth.** If your lobby or lounge features a fireplace, ensure it is lit for the shoot. Fire introduces an irreplaceable element of warmth and luxury.



06 Amenities & Exteriors

Beyond the Room: Preparing Your Resort's Amenities for Photography

To capture the full majesty of your resort, the exterior landscapes, wellness sanctuaries, and fitness facilities must be presented in their most pristine state. The camera captures the overall grandeur as well as the finest details. Please share these critical guidelines with your landscaping, spa, and recreation teams.

1. The Exterior & Pool Deck: Architectural Majesty

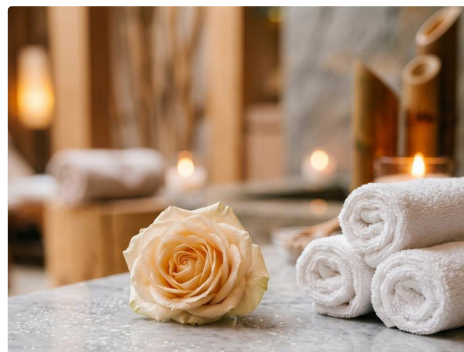
The exterior shots are often the hero images of your marketing campaign, requiring meticulous environmental control.

- **Symmetry and Alignment.** All sun loungers, umbrellas, and side tables must be perfectly aligned with geometric precision. If towels are placed on the loungers, they must be folded and placed identically.
- **Pristine Water and Decking.** Pools must be thoroughly skimmed and vacuumed immediately prior to the shoot. Ensure the surrounding deck is completely dry to prevent dark, uneven water patches on stone or wood.
- **Concealing Maintenance.** All garden hoses, pool cleaning equipment (e.g., robotic vacuums), trash cans, and stray pool toys must be entirely removed from the area.
- **Twilight Preparation.** For the highly sought-after “blue hour” shots at dusk, ensure all exterior lighting, underwater pool lights, and fire pits are fully operational and turned on before the sun sets.

2. The Spa & Wellness Retreat: The Ultimate Sanctuary

A spa must visually communicate absolute tranquility, cleanliness, and sensory indulgence.

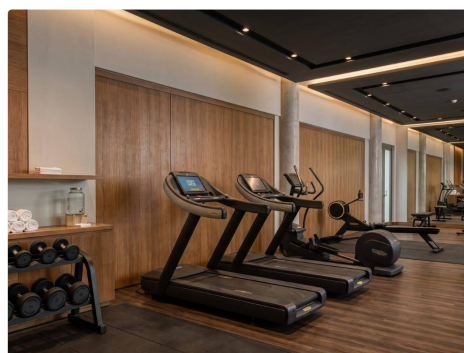
- **Sensory Staging.** Introduce elements of relaxation. Plump, perfectly rolled towels, lit candles, and perhaps a beautifully arranged tray with infused water or herbal tea bring the space to life.
- **Water Surface Perfection.** In indoor pools or jacuzzis, turn off the jets just before shooting to capture a glassy, mirror-like reflection of the architecture. (We may turn them back on for specific “action” lifestyle shots).
- **Removing Clinical Elements.** Temporarily remove highly visible “Warning,” “Slippery When Wet,” or “Rules of Use” signs. While legally necessary for operation, they disrupt the escapist illusion in luxury photography.



3. The Fitness Center: Peak Performance

Fitness areas should look dynamic, energizing, and immaculately hygienic.

- **Equipment Alignment.** Align all treadmills, stationary bikes, and benches perfectly. Free weights must be neatly racked in their designated order.
- **Screen and Mirror Polish.** Gyms are full of reflective surfaces. Mirrors, windows, and the black screens of cardio equipment must be aggressively polished to remove all fingerprints and sweat marks.
- **The Lifestyle Touch.** A neatly folded fresh towel and a branded, condensation-free water bottle placed on a bench or machine adds a high-end, inviting touch.



07 Lifestyle Curation

Selling the Dream: The Power of Lifestyle Photography

While architectural photography captures the physical space of your property, lifestyle photography captures its soul — it is the art of visual storytelling, curating an idealized yet relatable reality where potential guests can project themselves into the frame. When a viewer sees an elegant couple enjoying a sunset dinner or a family laughing by the pool, they stop looking at a hotel and start envisioning their own vacation. This emotional connection is the ultimate catalyst for direct bookings.

Executing a high-end lifestyle campaign requires meticulous planning and a strategic investment. Here is how we ensure your campaign delivers a profound return on investment:

1. The Narrative Strategy (Storyboarding)

We do not just take pictures of people; we direct experiences. Before the camera comes out, we develop a comprehensive visual brief and storyboard.

- **Defining the Experience.** What makes your property unique? Is it the serene spa, the vibrant culinary scene, or the secluded nature trails? We map out the exact “micro-moments” we want to capture — the clink of champagne glasses, a quiet morning coffee on the balcony, or the splash of a dive.
- **Target Audience Alignment.** The narrative must mirror your ideal guest profile. The imagery should seamlessly reflect the demographics, energy, and aspirations of the clientele you wish to attract.



2. Strategic Casting & Wardrobe

Authenticity is the currency of modern luxury. Viewers can instantly spot a forced or unnatural pose.

- **Believable Dynamics.** When casting couples or families, the chemistry must be palpable. Professional models are actors who can convey genuine emotion, but they must be cast appropriately (e.g., ensuring a “family” looks related, or that “golfers” actually know how to hold a club).
- **Timeless Wardrobe Choices.** The models' attire is just as important as the location itself. To ensure your images remain elegant and usable for years to come, it is highly recommended to coordinate a wardrobe that complements your property's color palette. We strongly suggest avoiding loud logos or hyper-trendy patterns, as these will quickly date the photographs.



3. The Financial & Legal Framework

A professional lifestyle shoot involves multiple moving parts, including model fees, hair and makeup artists (HMUA), styling, and catering.

- **Transparent Budgeting.** All costs, including agency fees and daily rates, must be outlined in advance to ensure a smooth production.
- **Securing Your Brand.** Proper Model Releases and Usage Rights are non-negotiable. These legal agreements protect your hotel, granting you the creative freedom to use the imagery across your global marketing channels without future complications.

4. Harnessing Seasonality

Your property offers a different kind of magic depending on the season. A roaring fireplace and hot chocolate create a cozy winter narrative, while vibrant wildflowers and sun-drenched terraces speak to the joy of spring. Planning lifestyle shoots around seasonal shifts ensures your marketing collateral remains fresh and relevant year-round.

5. Environmental Portraits: The Faces of Hospitality

True luxury is defined by service. Including environmental portraits of your dedicated staff adds a layer of warmth and trust to your portfolio. A portrait of your executive chef in the kitchen, the head concierge at their desk, or a bartender crafting a signature drink tells the story of the passionate individuals who create the guest experience.

Ready for Your Next Photoshoot?

These guidelines are the foundation of a flawless, high-impact production —
but every property has its own story to tell.

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