

Philadelphia Museum of Art, local hotel partner to take on sluggish February 🗝️



By Kenneth Hilario – Reporter, Philadelphia Business Journal

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The [Philadelphia Museum of Art](#) teamed up with a local hotel in a partnership that cross-promotes each property in an attempt to get more heads in bed and more people through the museum's galleries.

It's the Art Museum's first hotel partnership, according to [Alexandra Mazza](#), spokeswoman for HHM, which operates The Independent in Midtown Village, and it comes during what is traditionally one of the hospitality industry's slowest months.

The package offered by the Art Museum and The Independent comes with overnight hotel accommodations; two two-day passes to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Perelman Building and the Rodin Museum; complimentary parking; and a bottle of sparkling wine and chocolates.

[Auguste Rodin's *The Kiss* sculpture](#) is on view at the Rodin; museum and hotel officials said they thought it was an opportune time to create the cross-promotion in February and for Valentine's Day, the spokeswoman said. The hotel reached out to the museum before that to establish some sort of partnership.

"They are also installing a Rodin decal outside of the hotel to promote the exhibit," she said. "We realized we have crossover in our clients and that the rest of our guests might be interested in the museum and vice versa."

Along with promoting the exhibit, the partnership could potentially bring in more overnight travelers to Philadelphia in what is traditionally a need period for hotels.

February 2017 was the lowest month for revenue at The Independent and the fourth-lowest for attendance at the Art Museum, according to information provided to the *Philadelphia Business Journal* by HHM.

Initiatives have been done in the past to bring numbers up. Destination marketing organization Visit Philadelphia, for instance, in 2016 added to its existing Philly Overnight Hotel Package to generate **more overnight stays** in January last year.

The overnight package this year will have more of a dining focus, and 45 hotels will participate.

January and February are traditionally the slowest months for Center City hotels; occupancy starts to increase by June – historically the busiest month – before tapering by August and September.

January 2017 occupancy was 61.8 percent, and February occupancy was 67.4 percent, according to data from hotel analytics firm STR. Occupancy in Center City was 86.1 percent in June 2017.

January and February are also among the slowest months for attendance at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. There was on average over 48,900 visitors in January and 53,100 in February from fiscal years 2009 through 2017, according to museum data given to the *Business Journal* by HHM.

Attendance increased in March with an average of over 79,100 visitors in that time frame, then more than 83,000 visitors came in April.

Hoteliers and museums are doing more to attract people and more dollars; hotels are investing in amenities such as entertainment and event spaces for non-hotel guests, and museums launched events that involve beer and spirits like The Franklin Institute's Science After Hours that aims to draw the millennial demographic.

Center City hotel occupancy in 2017 remained flat from 2016, though still **maintaining record figures**. Occupancy was 78.2 percent in 2017, according to STR and CBRE Hotels, up from 78 percent occupancy rate seen in 2016.

There was a 4.5 percent increase in room inventory, as result of six new hotels opening.

Old City-based HHM operates nearly 135 hotels in the United States. Locally, it operates The Rittenhouse and the Westin Philadelphia, which [Hersha Hospitality Trust acquired in July](#) last year.

HHM **last year hired** a former Starr Restaurants executive to be senior vice president of restaurants and bars.