



1 Hotel Central Park, New York

IMAGE COURTESY OF LARK HOTELS

# FOLLOW My LEAD

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There's a reason they call it an Instagram life. Here's how designers and hoteliers are turning those polished shots into a powerful branding tool.

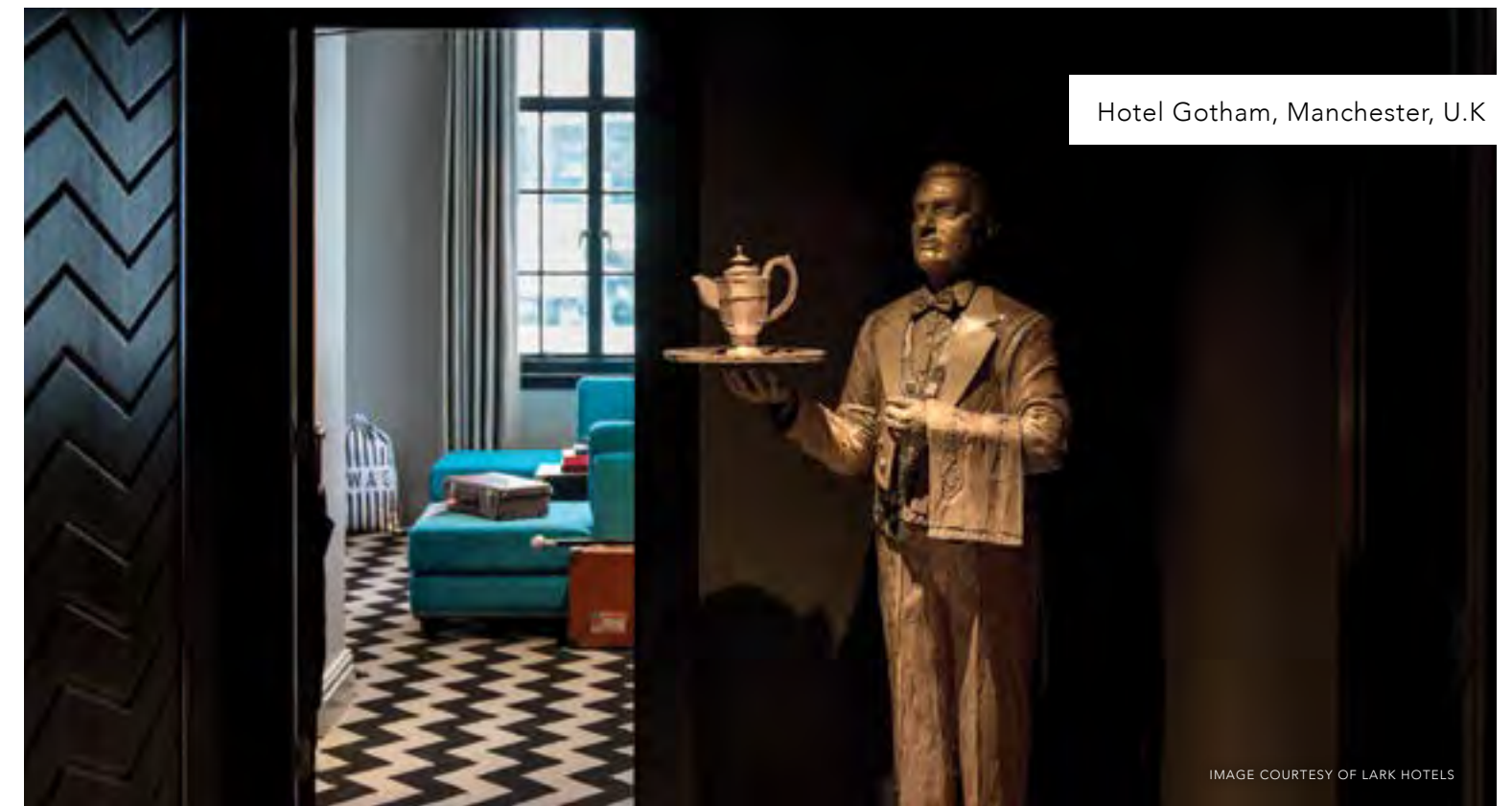
A picture is worth more than a thousand words—especially for hotels trying to differentiate themselves in the increasingly competitive lifestyle market. Great design and impeccable service lay a foundation to get guests in the door, but the “pop” of a riveting photo offers an unforgettable indentikit for the property's identity. Here are four share-worthy examples.



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◀ **THE SNAP:** Strike a pose before you even hit check-in.  
**THE PIECE:** A pair of doors made by Queens-based artist Charlie Baker that are decorated with 17,000 found locust branches.  
**THE MAKING-OF:** Starwood Capital Group's SVP design, Kemper Hyers, needed an element that would make an instant branding statement on the exterior of the building. “We needed to send a strong message that this was a nature-loving place,” he says. Cue the striking contrast between an intricate arrangement of trees and the urban slickness of the corner of Avenue of the Americas and 58th St.  
**THE PAYOFF:** We have growth in our social media channels due to our overall efforts (not just the doors),” says Hyers. In 2016 to date, the @1hotelCP Instagram channel has had a significantly higher follower growth rate (122%) than the average hospitality Instagram account from North America (56%).  
**THE REPOST VALUE:** Those visual inspirations are more than just pretty—they can also be functional. “I didn't want people to be able to see the front desk from the entry—it's = straight ahead as you walk in,” says Hyers. So, opaque doors offer a hint of mystique while they establish the property's brand.

**THE SNAP:** Go into service with a butler sculpture.  
**THE PIECE:** A sculpture of a butler commissioned by Art in Offices and crafted from cardboard layered down on a wooden “skeleton” and lacquered to protect the surface.  
**THE MAKING-OF:** The hotel's pre-opening marketing campaign included videos featured a set of dramatic personalities, including the butler. Inspired by a sculpture in London's One Aldwych, marketing director Mandy Sherliker wanted to bring one of the characters into the hotel's design to link the visuals of the marketing and the space.  
**THE PAYOFF:** Getting more love into an easily-overlooked corner of the hotel (the butler sits just outside a suite). Bespoke Hotels (which owns the property) chairman Robin Sheppard says that out of 2500 Instagram shots of the hotel, the butler is featured in 200.  
**THE REPOST VALUE:** Start building buzz from day one. The hotel starting sharing in-progress shots of the sculptures before they were finished and installed. The tie-in with the video helped maximize the hotel's marketing reach.



Hotel Gotham, Manchester, U.K

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