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A GANNETT COMPANY



Miranda Lambert

Lambert has fun 'messaging' with gossip, 1D

'Platinum' is all grown up, 2D

HOLLIS E. BENNETT FOR USA TODAY

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Marriott's #LoveTravels targets LGBT community

Other chains are also trying to lure gay travelers

Nancy Trejos USA TODAY

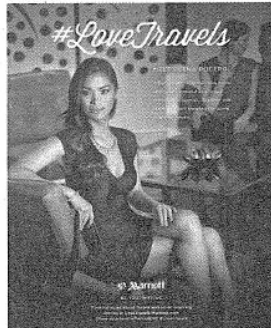
Marriott International is going after the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community with a new social-media and marketing campaign that launches today, joining a number of major hotel chains aggressively trying to lure the lucrative clientele.

#LoveTravels will feature images wrapped around five hotels in Washington, D.C., print advertisements in LGBT media, an online portrait gallery and other ads in various U.S. cities.

The ads will feature openly gay NBA player Jason Collins, among other spokespeople.

Images and videos plus personal stories will be available at LoveTravels.Marriott.com and at Marriott.com/gaytravel.

Marriott's campaign is the latest example of the hotel industry stepping up its efforts to lure LGBT travelers. While the company says it is targeting the community to make LGBT travelers



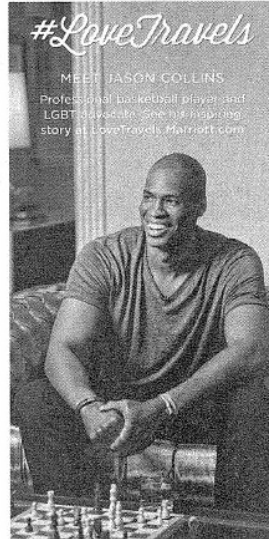
One of Marriott's new ads features transgender model Geena Rocero.

feel more welcome, there's also a business incentive.

According to Out Now Global, an LGBT marketing specialist group, the potential value of the LGBT travel market was set to reach \$181 billion last year.

The Supreme Court's striking down of the Defense of Marriage Act and the expansion of marriage equality has sparked more businesses to publicly reach out to the community.

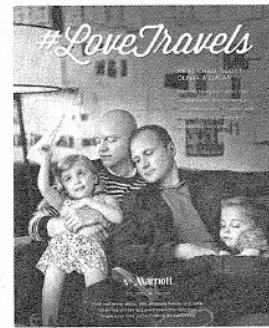
"It's almost expected at this point in the LGBT community," says David Paisley, senior research director at Community



Gay NBA player Jason Collins will be in a Marriott building ad wrap.

Marketing and Insights, an LGBT marketing research firm.

Since its start in San Francisco in the 1980s, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants has been at the forefront with its support of commu-



PHOTOS BY MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL This ad shows a gay couple with their kids as part of new campaign.

nity organizations advocating for the LGBT community.

But many other hotels have followed, by either offering special packages to honor Gay Pride events or launching campaigns specifically aimed at the gay traveler.

Preferred Hotel Group launched the Preferred Pride program in 2011 with more than 120 gay-welcoming independent hotels and resorts in 20 countries.

OUT NYC has called itself the first gay hotel in New York City. Hilton Worldwide has a gay travel

package and a website dedicated to helping LGBT guests plan their vacations.

Marriott's campaign will run through November. Braden Summers, a celebrity photographer, shot the photos of Collins, fashion model Geena Rocero and Marriott employee Talisha Padgett-Matthews.

"Our goal is really to educate and engage and shift perception of our portfolio brand," says Kristine Friend, senior director of segment marketing for Marriott International.

Rick Stiffler, Preferred Hotel Group's vice president of Leisure Sales, says hotels have no other choice but to pay attention to LGBT travelers, given how much they spend on travel.

"It's in the billions, and that really has a lot of people paying attention to the market," he says.

Collins, who started with the Brooklyn Nets last season, calls Marriott's outreach program "important not only to the LGBT community but to society in general."

He adds, "When I travel with a boyfriend, we really want to feel that sense of inclusiveness regardless of our sexual orientation or religion. We want that feeling of being welcome."