

Airbnb Joins the American Express Travel Portfolio

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Good Saturday morning . . . This week's Update comes to you from somewhere 40,000 feet over Kansas as I make my way back from Washington, D.C. the annual Georgetown hospitality law conference. Like so many other industry conferences and events this past year, this year's hospitality law conference featured a heavy (almost overwhelming) dose of everything AI and offered a somewhat sobering glimpse into the future practice of law in a post-AI world. I continue to give a lot of thought to the issue and worry that the slop (both in quantity and quality) so often generated by many of the most widely used AI platforms will soon become the norm in contracts, pleadings and communications generally in an ever increasing effort to move faster and to drive down the cost of legal work. I fear that the responses provided by most AI platforms may soon become the "just right" response that clients often require. I understand the motivation. Five figure legal bills to answer straightforward legal questions are not sustainable. But AI is only a tool (like other tools that have come before it) and is best leveraged by those who have a considerable understanding of the issue at hand (and likely years of experience in handling the issue or those similar). This phenomenon isn't limited to lawyers and the legal industry. How we ensure that young lawyers (or other professionals) gain that critical understanding and experience in a post-AI world is a question that all lawyers – both outside counsel and the clients who hire them - will soon need to answer. Have thoughts on the issue? I would love to hear from you.

And now to our weekly Update. Two stories garnered much of this past week's headlines - yet another EU investigation into Booking.com and American Express's recently announced exclusive partnership with Airbnb to feature Airbnb inventory on American Express' travel platform. Enjoy.

Wyndham Answers the Agent Question. In last week's earnings call, Wyndham CEO, Geoff Ballotti, introduced a new target category of Wyndham guests, the AI Agent. According to Ballotti, agents associated with Instinct, Mews and Dots can now search and book Wyndham rooms on behalf of travelers. What is the effect of welcoming this new target guest? By welcoming these agents, Wyndham hopes to grow the ever important number of direct bookings, thereby reducing Wyndham's overall cost of distribution. With contribution levels from these new agents (and LLMs, for that matter) still negligible, we will have to wait and see whether this new form of traveler materializes.

Airbnb Offerings Now Available Through American Express. American Express cardholders in the U.S. will soon be able to browse one million Airbnb accommodations through a new homes tab on the American Express' website and in the mobile application. Bookings of the Airbnb offerings will entitle cardholders to their usual member benefits, including membership points and lodging credits (premium cardholders only

for eligible stays at luxury properties). Rewards points may also be redeemed for the Airbnb bookings. Cardholders may search and view properties on the American Express' website and app but will be re-directed to Airbnb to complete a booking. Completed bookings will be viewable on American Express' platforms but managed on Airbnb. With this new exclusive partnership, American Express has shut down its previous select homes offering.

EU Announces Latest Investigation of Booking.com. The EU Commission announced this past week a new DSA investigation into Booking.com over its alleged failure to tackle adequately the risk of fraudulent listings and phishing scams. Regular readers of our Update won't be surprised by the fraudulent listing and phishing concerns. What is surprising, however, is the EU's additional focus on the adequacy of Booking's identification of paid (or "boosted") listings on Booking.com's platform as advertisements. What effect might this have on Booking's advertising products and services and the return on those products and services?

Have a great week everyone.

[Airbnb Can Now Be Booked Through Amex Travel in Its Deepest Loyalty Tie-Up Yet](#)

October 22, 2026 via Skift

By putting its search inside Amex Travel, and letting Amex's premium cardholders spend lodging credits on Airbnb Luxe, Airbnb boosts its high-end inventory and looks a lot more like a conventional lodging supplier than it ever has.

[Wyndham Courts AI Booking Agents in Push for Direct Bookings](#)

October 22, 2026 via Skift

The Super 8 and La Quinta franchiser is opening its inventory to Meta's Muse, OpenAI, and Instinct. Morgan Stanley analysts think AI agents could cost hotel groups less per booking than online travel agencies do.

[Introducing a New Way to Book Stays and Unlock Benefits Through American Express Travel](#)

October 22, 2026 via Airbnb

Airbnb and American Express are partnering to offer Airbnb guests who are also eligible US Card Members more benefits for eligible stays with Airbnb. For the first time, guests will be able to browse more than one million Airbnb listings on AmexTravel.com or in the Amex Travel App.

[Meta Calls Travel 'a Top Use Case' for Muse - and Zuck Wants a Cut](#)

October 21, 2026 via Skift

Meta already influences where people want to go. Its AI agent is primed to help it take a cut when they book.

[EU Investigating Booking.com Over Action on Fraud Cases](#)

October 21, 2026 via RTE News

The EU is taking action against online travel agency Booking.com over how the reservations platform

combats scams amid evidence of a surge in alleged fraud cases this year.

Posted in [Online Travel Update](#)

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