

Marriott and Spotnana Launch Direct Connection

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Good Sunday afternoon from rainy Seattle . . . Our Online Travel Update for the week ending Friday, September 11, 2026, is below. It was a busy week in the online travel world as the travel industry returned to work from the summer holidays. News this past week from Spotnana, Marriott and Google garnered most of the industry's attention. Enjoy.

Marriott and Spotnana Join the Move to Direct Connections. First came Hilton and Navan. Now, Marriott and Spotnana are joining the transition to direct (API) connections. Unlike the Hilton/Navan announced connection, which, for now, benefits only a single point of sale (Navan), last week's announcement by Marriott and Spotnana represents a much broader transition as Spotnana's role as an increasingly important connectivity provider means that multiple points of sale (TMCs, OBTs and others) will benefit from direct connectivity to Marriott's CRS and loyalty systems. One thing is clear about both of these recent announcements, business travelers (and their employers) stand to benefit from these important changes. I'm excited to see what comes next.

Booking.com Loses Appeal of Anti-Trust Veto of ETraveli Acquisition. On Wednesday, the EU's General Court rejected Booking Holdings' appeal of the EU Commission's 2023 veto of Booking Holdings planned purchase of ETraveli Group. According to the Court, "The Commission found, correctly, that the acquisition of Etraveli Group, Europe's leading online flight booking operator, would have strengthened Booking's already dominant position on the market for online travel agencies in the hotel sector." Booking Holdings can still appeal the decision to the EU's highest court. Since Wednesday, several commentators have suggested that the ruling provides Booking Holdings' competitor, Expedia, a significant advantage at least with regard to the regulatory scrutiny paid to potential mergers and acquisitions.

AI's Biggest Effects on Lodging Industry? According to Marriott CEO, Anthony Caputo, the clear answer is distribution (or how travelers find and book hotels). Thank you Anthony, I couldn't agree more.

Google Reveals Important Changes to EU Search Results to Satisfy EU Regulators. For weeks now, I've included stories in our Update detailing first the landmark ruling against Google under the DMA over its alleged self-preferencing and more recently Google's many rumored changes to search results for EU users. For weeks, I've been on my soap box warning readers that the new search results could mean bad news for hoteliers seeking to drive direct traffic (and could instead provide a huge win to travel aggregators and intermediaries). On Tuesday, Google rolled out its "final" revised search results across the EU.

- Responses to the new search results have varied widely. Interestingly, Google issued a public warning of sorts with the rollout. According to Google, the new results "degrade the user experience for Europeans - boosting online intermediaries at the expense of local businesses and removing helpful features people rely on every day." While Google's comments must be considered in the broader context (i.e. Google's own self-interest), testing of previous similar search results layouts have suggested a dramatic drop in traffic to direct channels (and increased costs to hoteliers, restaurateurs and small businesses seeking to remain competitive). EU Travel Tech (a European intermediary lobbying group) praised the changes. European hoteliers have remained somewhat neutral as the full scope of changes becomes wider known. I would love to hear from our readers on these important changes and what it might mean to your future online search strategy.

Have a great week.

[Spotnana and Marriott International Transform Corporate Hotel Distribution with New Direct Integration](#)

September 10, 2026 via Marriott

Spotnana, a leading provider of modern travel infrastructure, today announced a new direct integration with Marriott International, the world's largest hospitality company, designed to transform how corporate travelers shop for, book and manage hotel stays.

[Marriott and Spotnana Go Public With Direct-Connect Deal](#)

September 10, 2026 via The Beat

Spotnana and Marriott International on Thursday announced a direct integration that gives the technology provider access to Marriott's central reservation system.

[Meta Says Its Muse Agent Books Travel. Here's How It Works](#)

September 10, 2026 via Skift

Meta's Muse plugs directly into flights but shops the rest of travel through the open web. That puts the AI agent, not a travel integration, in control of where the search goes.

[Booking Loses Court Fight Against EU Veto of ETraveli Deal](#)

September 9, 2026 via Reuters

Booking Holdings on Wednesday lost its fight against an EU antitrust veto of its €1.63 billion (\$1.90 billion) ETraveli acquisition three years ago, as Europe's second-highest court sided with regulators.

[Google Admits It Just Made Search Worse for Europeans to Dodge Brussels Fines](#)

September 9, 2026 via Web Prone News

Google rolled out revised search results across Europe on Tuesday. The changes comply with an order from the European Commission. They also come with an unusual public warning from the company itself.

[Marriott CEO Says AI Will Impact Hotel Distribution First](#)

September 9, 2026 via Skift

Marriott CEO Anthony Capuano was asked where AI is showing up in practice. He said the “biggest impact” so far has been on “distribution,” or how travelers discover hotels online.

[Google Removes Vacation Rentals Unit from Search Results in the EEA](#)

September 8, 2026 via PhocusWire

Google has removed the vacation rentals unit on the Google Search results page for users in the European Economic Area (EEA) as part of ongoing changes to comply with the Digital Markets Act (DMA).

[Travel Firm Ads Banned Over Misleading 'Eco' Hotel Claims](#)

September 8, 2026 via The Independent

Thomas Cook, loveholidays and DialAFlight ads all broke advertising rules by using terms such as 'Eco Resort', 'Eco Hotel' and 'eco-conscious resort'.

[Google Strips Out EU Travel Search Features to Avoid More Fines](#)

September 8, 2026 via Skift

Google is scaling back certain search features in Europe as DMA enforcement escalates.

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