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Creative Tourism Marketing Campaigns

 CrowdRiff





Amrita Chandra
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CrowdRiff

I spend a lot of time with destination marketers, and one question people always ask is:

“What creative things are other DMO marketing teams doing?”

We can all benefit from learning from our peers, building off their creative ideas to design campaigns for our destinations.

In response to this frequent request, I rounded up some of the creative destination marketing campaigns I’ve come across over the last year. Some of these initiatives were powered by CrowdRiff’s visual marketing platform, but most are simply cool visually-appealing campaigns I wanted to share.

As a marketer myself, and a proud member of the travel and tourism marketing community, I hope this inspires you, entertains you and helps spark some new ideas for your own initiatives.

Any questions? Want to be featured in a future article or ebook?

Tweet me [@amritachandra](https://twitter.com/amritachandra) or shoot me an email at amrita@crowdriff.com



CrowdRiff's visual marketing platform
is loved by over **200 tourism brands**
across the globe.



Video

We all know video is hot. Here are some creative and impactful ways destinations are using video as a marketing tool.

1 What to OKC

Visit OKC has been investing in video content, earning them great traction on social media in particular.

One of their most popular video initiatives is a monthly series called What to OKC, which gives visitors and locals ideas of what to do in Oklahoma City in a given month.

The video series is featured in a section of the OKC website, and is promoted through the DMO’s monthly newsletter at least 10 days before the beginning of the following month.

What’s notable about this series is that it gives audiences highly relevant content at the right time, whether they are about to arrive in the city, or are in-market, looking for last-minute ideas of things to do.

The consistency of the series also makes it a go-to resource for travelers and locals alike. Finally, by shooting this amount of video content, the OKC marketing team gets plenty of b-roll footage to repurpose for other marketing initiatives.



In This Section

- All Events
- May in OKC
- Monthly Festivals
- Annual Events
- Submit an Event

Featured Events

2017 WHEELER CRITERIUM

VIEW ALL

MAY IN OKC

A trip to Oklahoma City has never been more exciting than now with popular attractions, exciting festivals and sports of all kinds. It's the perfect time for a week or weekend away to explore and see what our city has to offer.



OKLAHOMA CITY DODGERS

Take your family out to the 12 home games of the Oklahoma City Dodgers in May.

SILVERSUN PICKUPS

DCF Concerts presents Silversun Pickups with special guest Kiev in concert at the Diamond Ballroom!

HINDER & NONPOINT WITH SPECIAL GUEST NINE SHRINES

DCF Concerts & TLP Entertainment Present Hinder/Nonpoint with special guests Nine Shrines, Sign of Lies & Soul Crises at the Diamond Ballroom!



2 24 Hours of Wow in South Africa

South African Tourism had to come up with a clever way to educate travelers on the diversity of experiences available beyond the safari adventures the country is best known for.

They were inspired by the massive increase of online video consumption and crafted the 24 Hours of Wow campaign.

The 24-Hours of Wow campaign encourages visitors to build their own 24-hour adventure by mixing together 6-second video clips, each of which correspond to a specific hour of the day.

24hoursofwow.southafrica.net, was promoted internally through programmatic ad buys, blog content and social media campaigns that targeted users based on their interests. Regional offices also developed physical campaigns and activations that targeted local consumers all over the world.

Since its launch the microsite has been visited over 600,000 times, with the average visitor spending approximately three minutes, though in months immediately following launch site visits averaged almost 10.

Though the 24 Hours of Wow campaign currently lives on its own microsite South African Tourism seeks to put the campaign at the front and center of a new main page that is currently under development.



3 Visit Seattle's 40 Million Minutes of Viewing Time

How do you market a place that has the potential to be all things to all people? How do you get people to explore a place they think they already know?

These were all questions Ali Daniels, the Vice President of Marketing for Visit Seattle, was considering in 2011 when her organization received funding to promote the city as a leisure destination for the very first time.

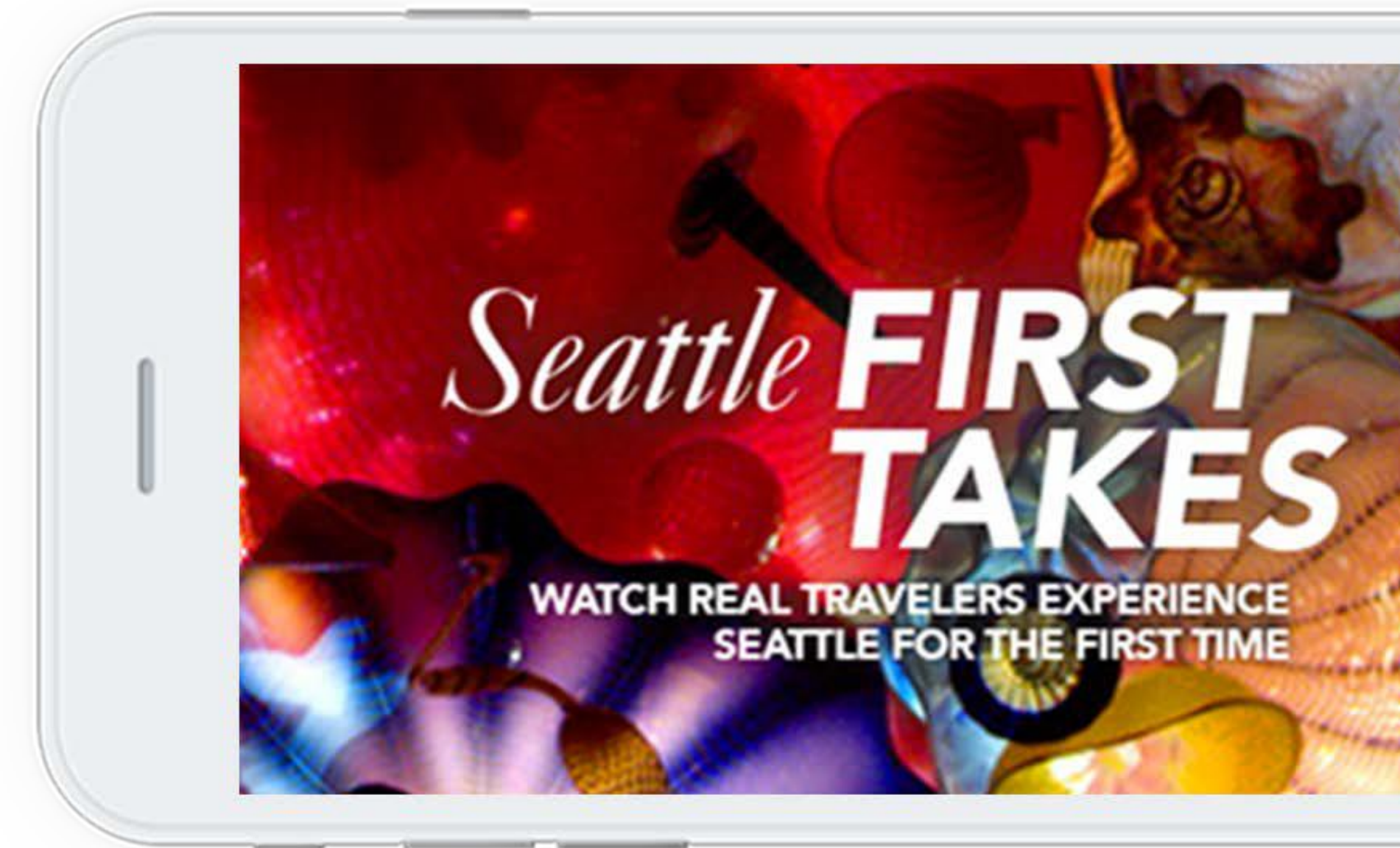
They decided to bet big on user-generated content, particularly video content, and launched the groundbreaking online video channel VisitSeattle.tv

Today, the videos Visit Seattle and its partners have uploaded have been consumed for over 40 million minutes total, spread across seven distinct series. There are two more scheduled for 2017.

Visit Seattle also has two series that they produce independently: Seattle First Takes, which shares the stories of first time visitors, and Hey Seattle, which acts as the Visit Seattle's FAQ section, hosted by Seattle musician and podcaster John Roderick, who answers tourists questions from the desk of a mobile talk show set sitting on a flatbed truck.

While each of these videos differs significantly in their content, there are a few running themes — most notably the city's role in the content: taking the backseat.

Since the end of 2015 Visit Seattle has produced 128 individual pieces of content, which have achieved a 67% view-through rate; an impressive feat considering videos can last as long as 22 minutes.



VISIT
seattle

4 Tourism Toronto

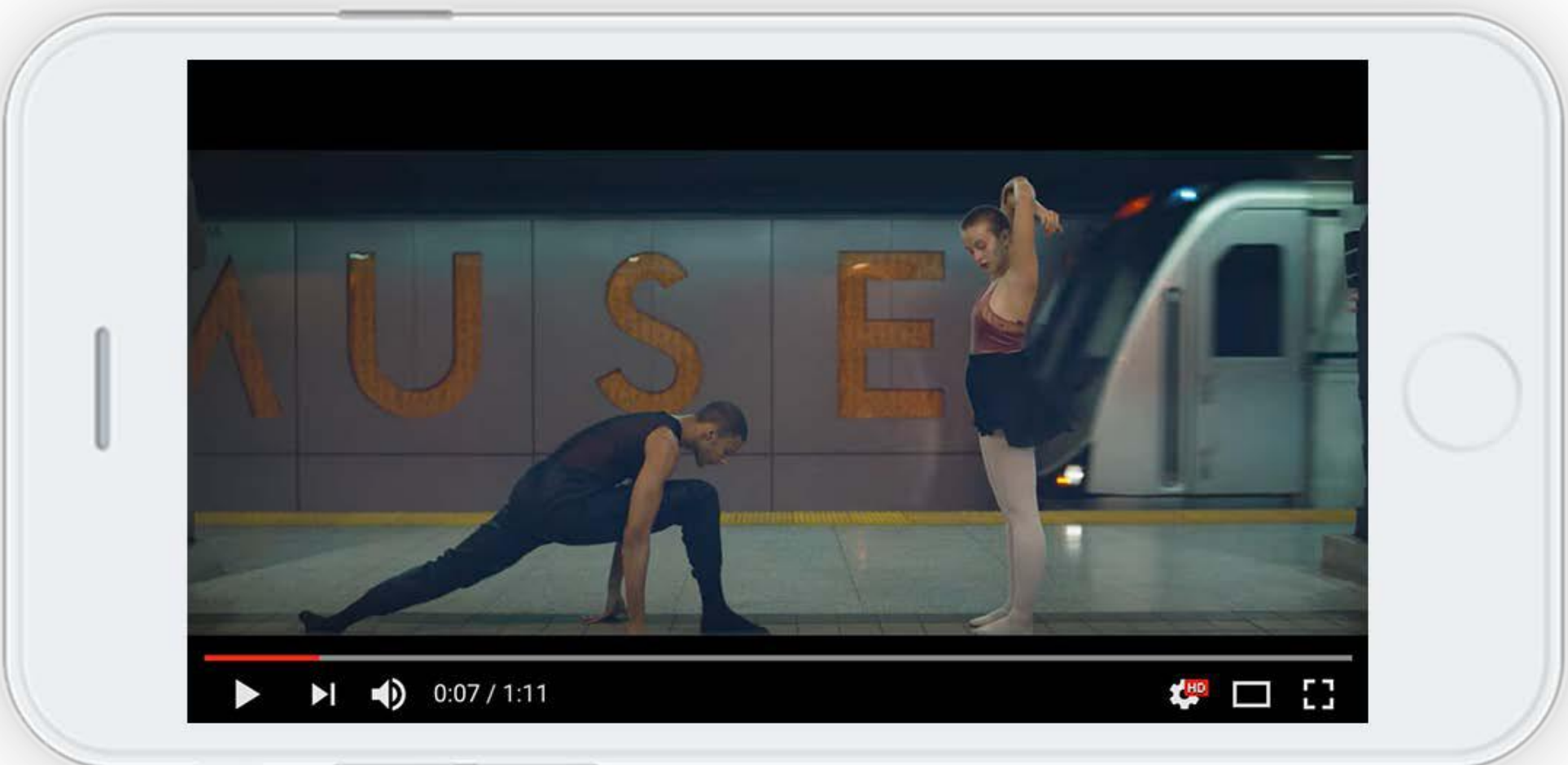
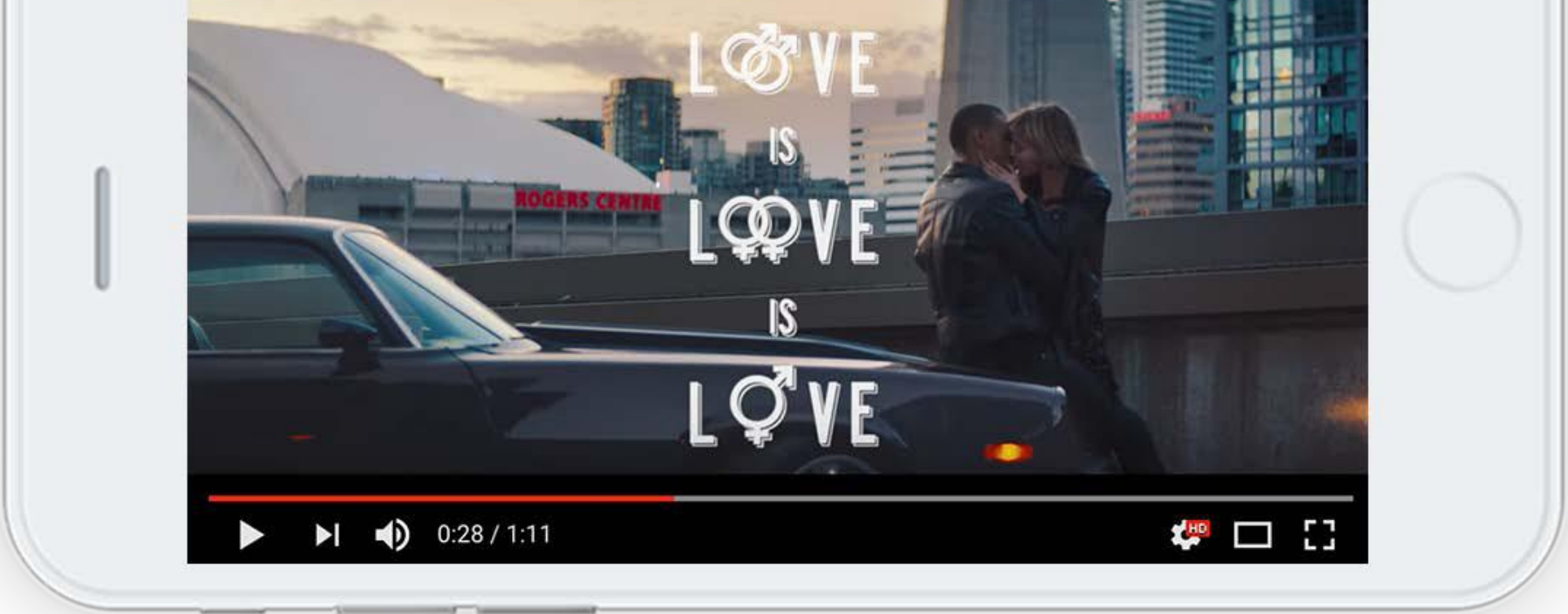
Think of Toronto and you may conjure up the typical Canadian tropes of maple syrup, hockey and skating. Tourism Toronto wanted to break that stereotype, and launched a groundbreaking advertising campaign that tapped into a hot-button topic in world affairs — diversity and inclusion.

Developed by its agency J. Walter Thompson, this video is a masterful production, from the choice of music, its pacing, and its ability to capture the energy of the city. Tourism Toronto’s campaign was broadcast on YouTube as well as television across its key target markets in the US.

At home, the campaign was a source of much pride, and received coverage on all the major news networks as well as broad sharing on social media.

But don’t just take our word for it. View the video for yourself at:

https://youtu.be/eS_tYWloZzk



5 Experiencing an L.A. state of mind

The marketing team at Discover Los Angeles discovered through market research that the city was a draw to visitors because of a feeling related to the lifestyle of its residents and its locale.

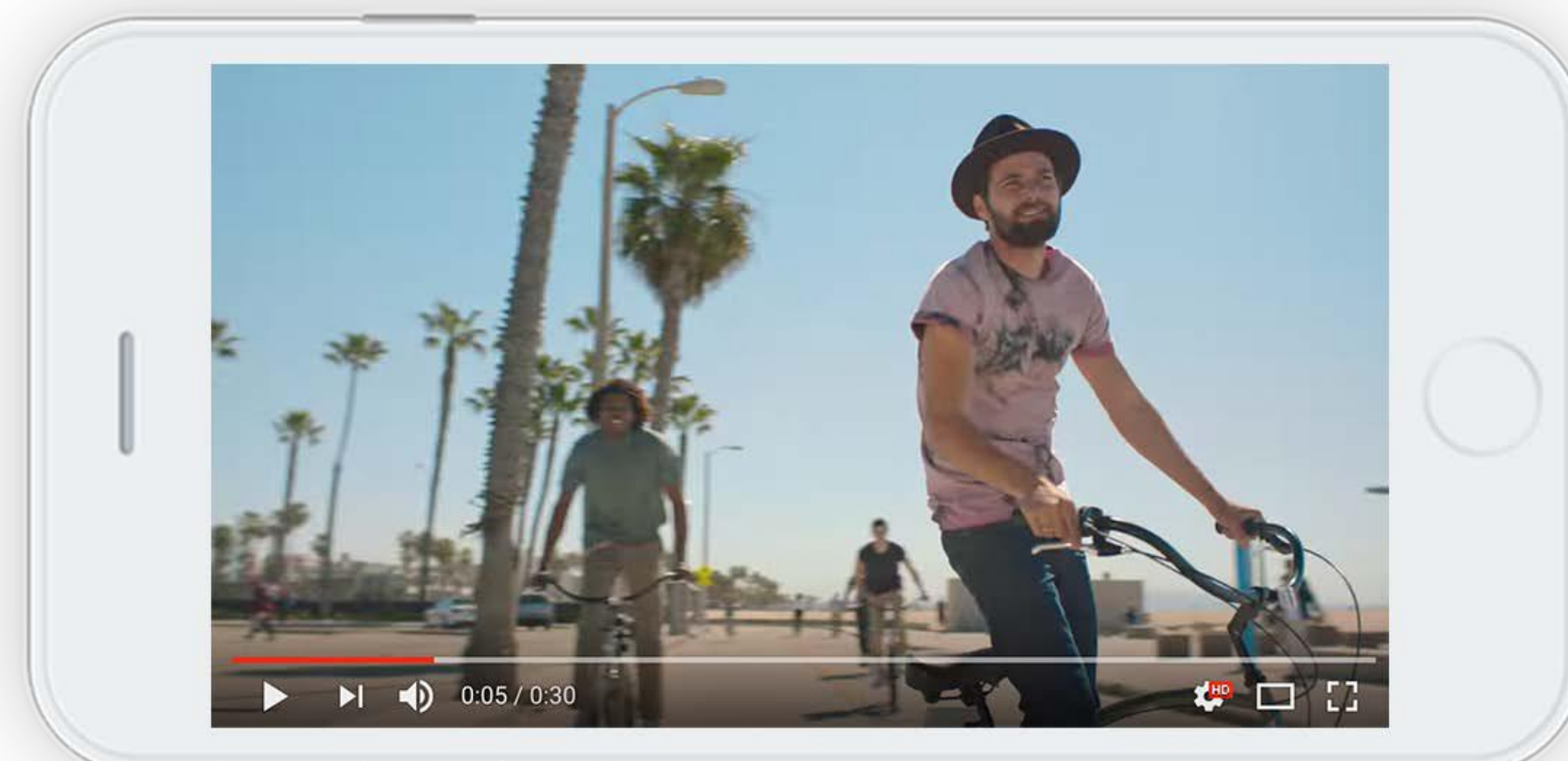
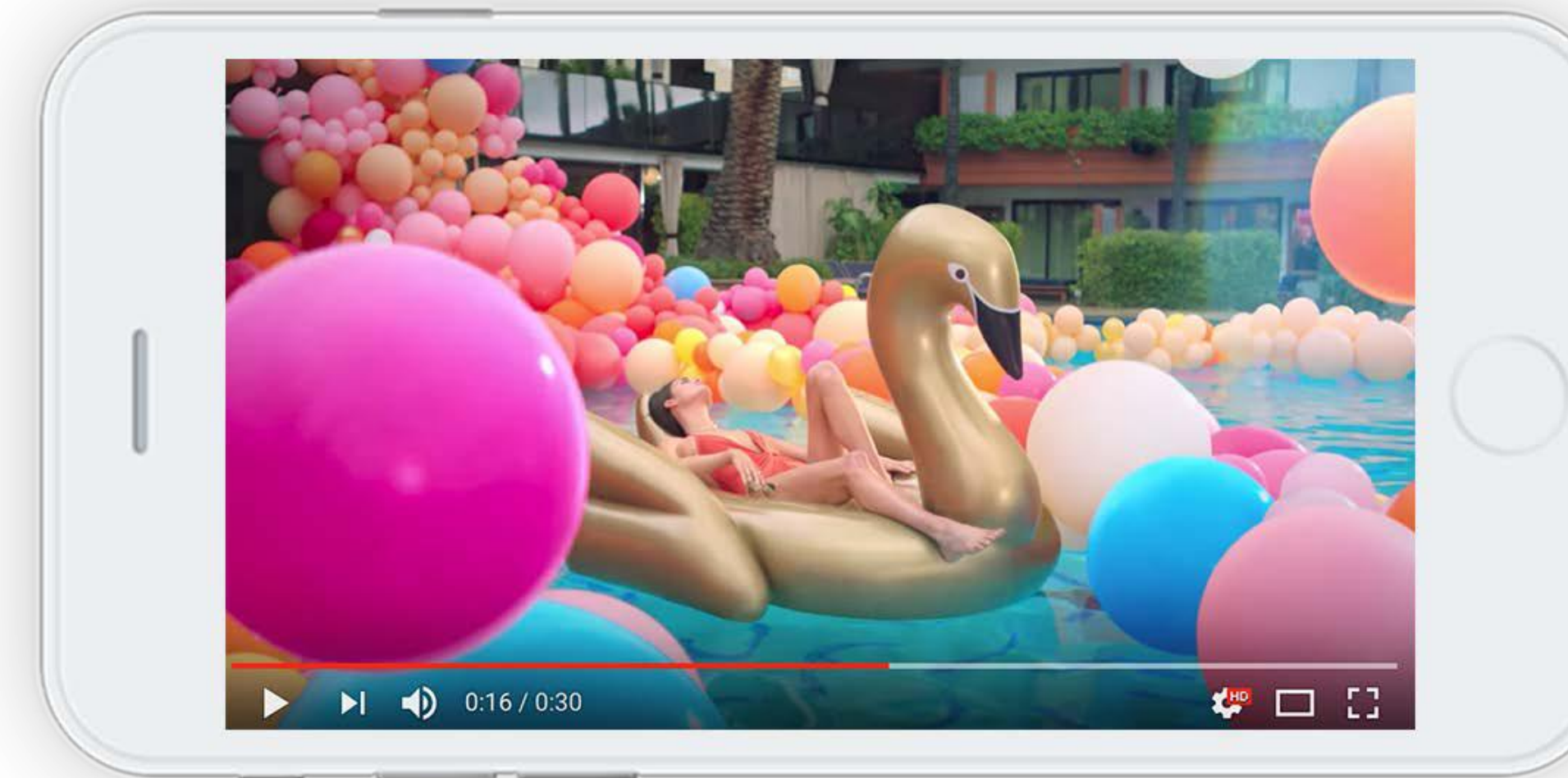
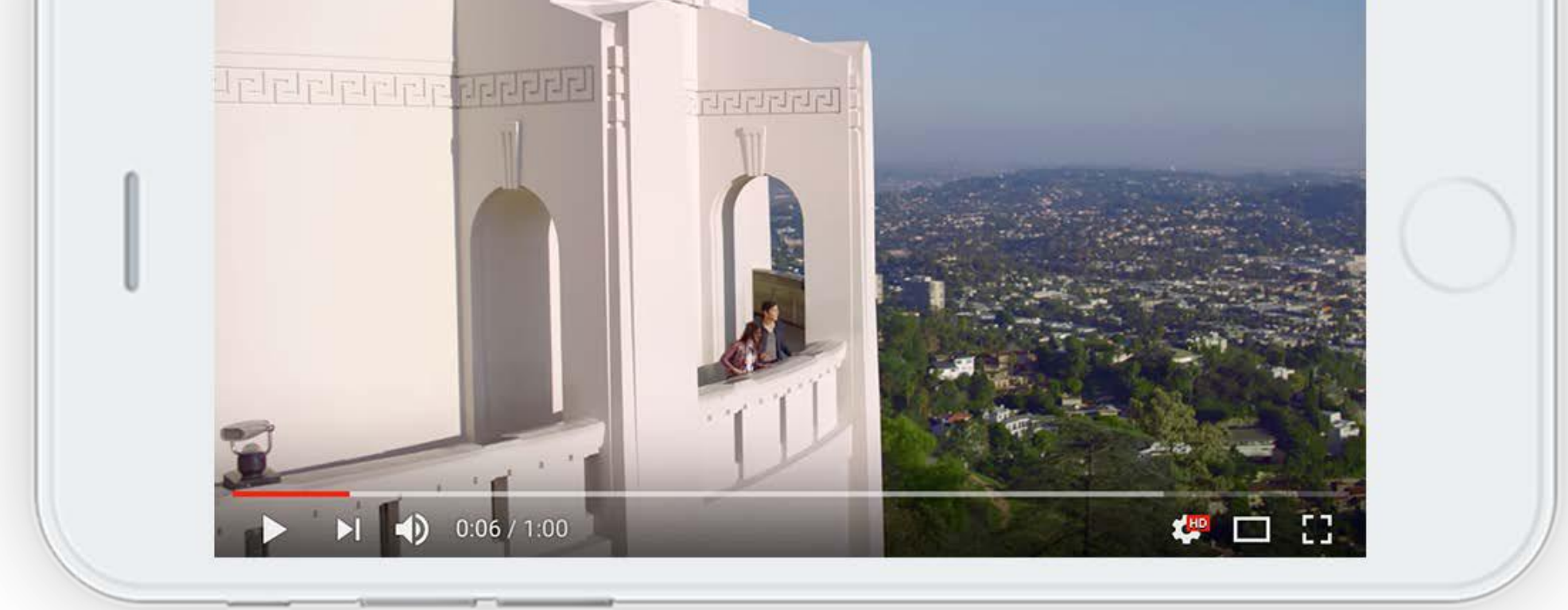
With that in mind they created a new integrated campaign focused on 3 different moods of the city — Chill, Magic and Electric — as expressed through visuals.

The campaign was launched with TV spots during the Super Bowl and was later expanded to other media including out of home, YouTube pre-roll and social media.

Subway commuters in New York were invited to take selfies against a backdrop installed in the Union Square station, as part of a social media contest giveaway for a trip for 2 to L.A.

Following the U.S. kickoff, the series was shown in key target markets including the UK, Mexico, Canada, China and Australia.

DISCOVER
Los Angeles



Social Media

We uncover some interesting ways destinations from small towns to large regions are using social media to reach and engage travelers.

6 Visit Omaha

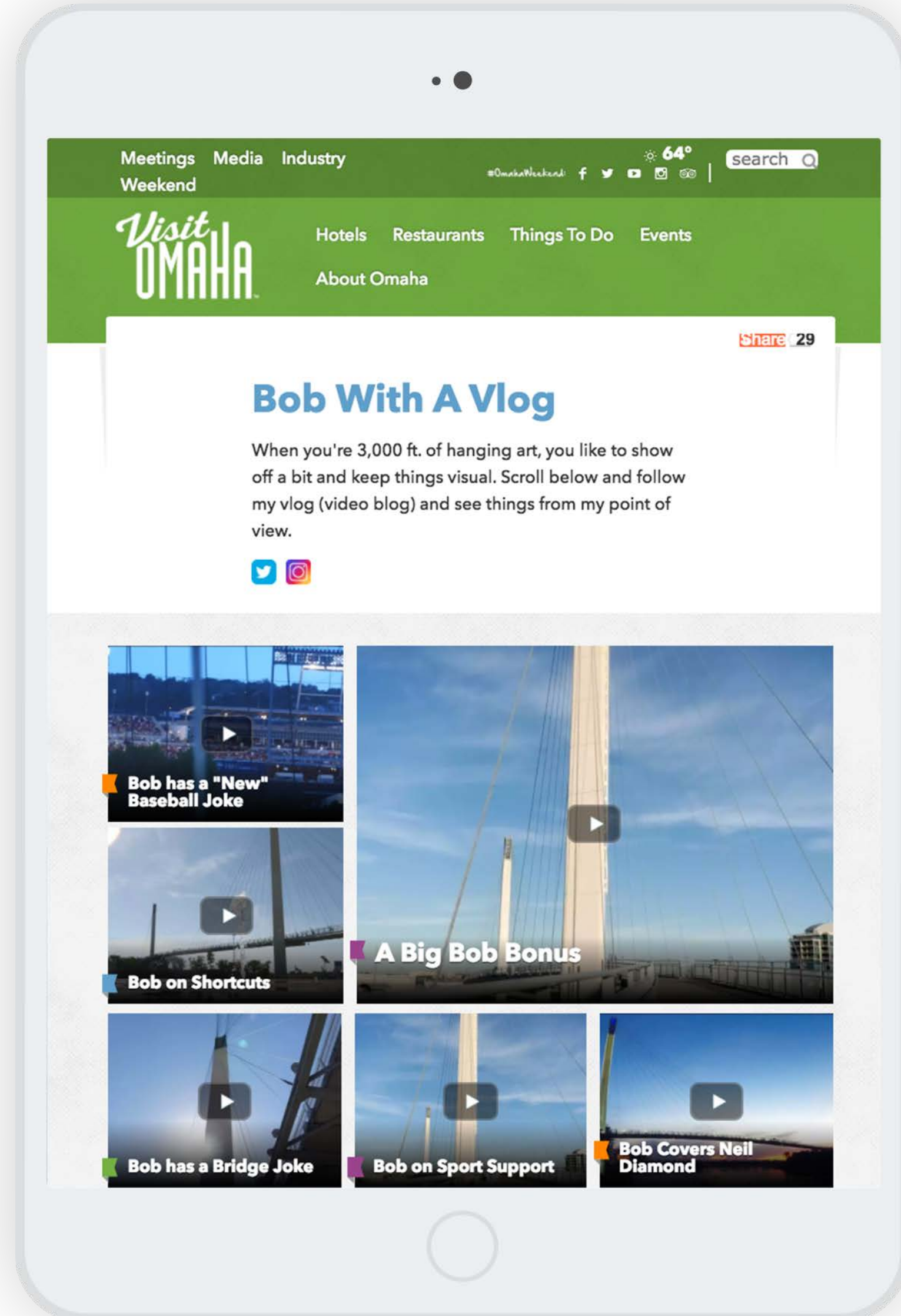
Visit Omaha's marketing team was looking for an iconic symbol for the city, one that would be easily identified with the city.

They set their sights on the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge, a striking 3,000 foot walkway crossing the Missouri River.

To draw attention to the bridge and draw more attention to it as an identifiable landmark, they gave the pedestrian bridge a personality.

Bob the Bridge, as he is now called, has his own social media account and has built up a following with both locals and travelers alike.

Bob is no ordinary bridge — he Tweets, blogs, vlogs and even flirts with other bridges, all under the hashtag #ithappensonbob



7 Visit Savannah and Visit Tybee

Both located on the coast of Georgia, and only 20 minutes apart, these two destinations work very closely together.

Together they have created highly collaborative content strategies — working not only with each other, but with their tourism partners too to create high-quality sponsored articles.

They pay special attention to the questions their online audiences are asking and use these inquiries as inspiration for topics.

Since both DMOs are agencies employed by the area's Chamber of Commerce, they feature members and also sell sponsored content opportunities to local partners.


The content teams work together with the local partner on the topic, and tour the location with their videographer or photographer.

Once the article is published they use both social media and ad buys to ensure it reaches the right people.

Their efforts have paid off, with social media referrals to their destination websites increasing by over 100% year over year.




HOME STAY ▾ EAT SEE & DO ▾ TRAVEL AID ▾ GROUP TRAVEL



5. Make yourself at home.

Whether you're staying for an evening or a season, there are plenty of amenities at [River's End](#) to make you feel comfortable. A full pool, laundry room, TV lounge, indoor restrooms and a fitness center are all available for your use during your stay. Now, get out there and make the most of your time on Tybee Island!

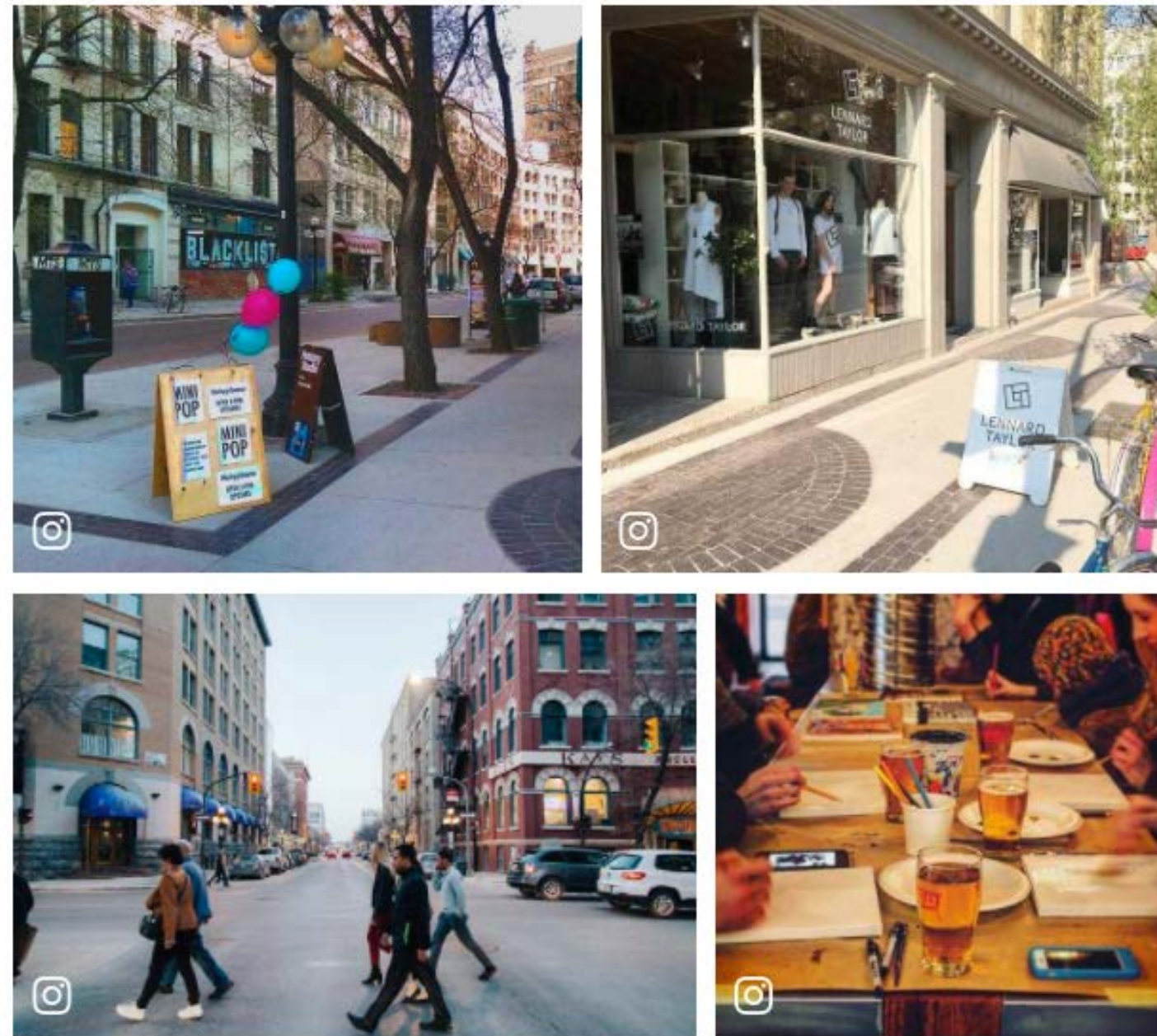
To make your reservation at [River's End Campground and RV Park](#), click [here](#) or call 1(800)786-1016.



Jess Brannen is Visit Tybee's Digital Content Coordinator. She is a Savannah native and loves playing with Sir Charles Barkley, her neurotic golden retriever, and watching reruns of Martha Stewart's cooking shows while eating chocolate.

First Fridays

For the arts-inclined, “TGIF” takes on new meaning at the beginning of each month in Winnipeg’s historic Exchange District.



Artists Sue Gordon and Karen Schulz are the masterminds behind **First Fridays**, inspired by similar events that take place in major cities, including in Kansas City where Gordon became motivated to bring it home. Here’s how it works: On the first Friday of each month (year-round), Winnipeg’s Exchange District comes alive as artists open their studio doors for those with a curious eye. Depending on the type of explorer you are, there are two different ways to enjoy the event. The independent type can embark on a self-guided tour through art galleries, studios and craft exhibits. Guides are available 10 days before the event on the First Fridays website and include special events such as art gallery openings and opportunities to get hands-on with art.

8 Travel Manitoba

The province of Manitoba, Canada has used great visual storytelling to draw in an audience on social media.

What’s the secret to their success? For starters, the team at Travel Manitoba doesn’t just share every visual that’s tagged with their #exploremb hashtag.

They curate only the best photos for their social feeds, with a blend of professional photography and high quality UGC visuals from both well known influencers and every day travelers.

Their stunning images inspire travelers to visit the diverse experiences the province has to offer, and are embedded into their highly-visual blog and microsites that focus on special events or niche experiences.

Next, they use this content as a conversation starter with the people who are sharing their travels in Manitoba, cultivating an engaged following of more than 50,000 users in the past year and over 190,000 uses of their official hashtag.

Finally, their videos are produced to be highly shareable on social media, receiving hundreds of thousands of views and introducing people to new Manitoba experiences.



“I think the most crucial part of making visuals stand out is consistency. Consistency is found in the kind of content that is being produced through color tones and style of imagery that helps present an easy-to-follow story.

The first impression made when arriving to a destination page is a story told from a 30,000 foot level — it says we are a destination that has a strong culinary scene, or maybe it's adventure.

My best advice is to stick to three to four core types of visual content and execute a style that resonates with your destination branding. ”

Jessica Wright

Influencer

Founder, Bon Traveler



Experiential

Travel is all about creating great experiences. Here are some cool campaigns engaging with traveler either in-person or in-market.

9 Visit Stockton

Destination marketers understandably focus on attracting travelers to their destination, with less of a focus on what happens once they are in market.

Visit Stockton saw this as a missed opportunity to engage with both visitors and locals in their destination, and embarked on a new initiative that was the first of its kind in California.

People can text the DMO with any questions about eating out, shopping or activities in the city and get a response in real-time from a staff member.

Powered by a tool called Chatbox, Visit Stockton's texting service extends their website live chat, and offers services from 8am-8pm, 7 days a week.

The service is promoted through signage throughout the city as well as their visitor guide and social media channels.



DID YOU KNOW

YOU CAN TEXT US

STOCKTON
—STOCKED FULL OF FLAVOR—

Did you know you can text our team at Visit Stockton about dining, shopping, and things to do in the city? We are available to answer questions via text using the existing Visit Stockton toll free number at **877-778-6258**. Travelers and residents can extend a direct line to those who know Stockton best.

Text us yourself and test out the system... we would love to hear from you!

The Visit Stockton office in Downtown Stockton is open Monday through Friday from 8:00am to 4:00pm. Our hours are now extended to include texting service from 8am to 8pm
Seven Days a Week!



10 Colorado Springs

One Colorado Springs resident seems to attract more attention than others — the legendary BigFoot, whose sightings date back to the 1800s.

The Colorado Springs DMO capitalized on BigFoot's mythology by launching a BigFoot sighting on April Fools Day.

Students from a local college were hired to dress up as the Sasquatch, and signs of a sighting were placed on the highway.

People started taking pictures of themselves with BigFoot and posting it on social media, and the campaign went viral.

As a result, the local news came and did a story and it attracted the attention of a national television show, who is now coming to town looking for BigFoot.

Thanks to the success of this campaign, Colorado Springs now hosts a weekly BigFoot Friday, where people are rewarded for finding BigFoot around the area.

Image credit: @abbiburk, rights acquired via CrowdRiff



11 Visit Denver Rocks Out

The famous Red Rocks Ampitheater, outside of Denver, attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year, many of whom stay and visit Denver as part of their itinerary.

One of the primary markets for Visit Denver is the city of Chicago.

To celebrate the 75th anniversary of RedRocks, and attract more visitors to the Denver area, the Visit Denver DMO took over the streets of Chicago one weekend, with a massive replica of Red Rocks and a series of concerts in the Windy City.

#RedRocksChicago was attended by over 75,000 people, and the campaign received over \$1 million in media coverage, exposing new and returning visitors to the the concert venue.

With the success of this campaign, Visit Denver plans to repeat the experience once again in 2017.





12 Rolling through Visit Ventura

It's not every day that a world famous cycling competition rolls through Ventura, California, so the team at the Visit Ventura DMO decided to amp up the excitement.

They learned that the route was passing close to a local school, so they coordinated with the school administration to enlist the support of its students.

Students lined the route in the formation of the Ventura logo, and a drone was deployed to take aerial photos.

For extra impact, everyone participating was given noisemakers, creating an unmissable presence as the cyclists flew past.

This campaign generated so much buzz that it received national coverage.



13 Postcard from Visit Anchorage

Sometimes the simplest ideas make the best campaigns.

The team at Visit Anchorage decided to offer stamped postcards in its visitor center, to encourage people to share their experiences of their visit.

Interestingly, the campaign was a big hit with millennials, many of whom had never seen or written a postcard before!



Websites

How do you make your destination website an essential resource for travelers and locals? Take some tips from the destinations featured here.

14

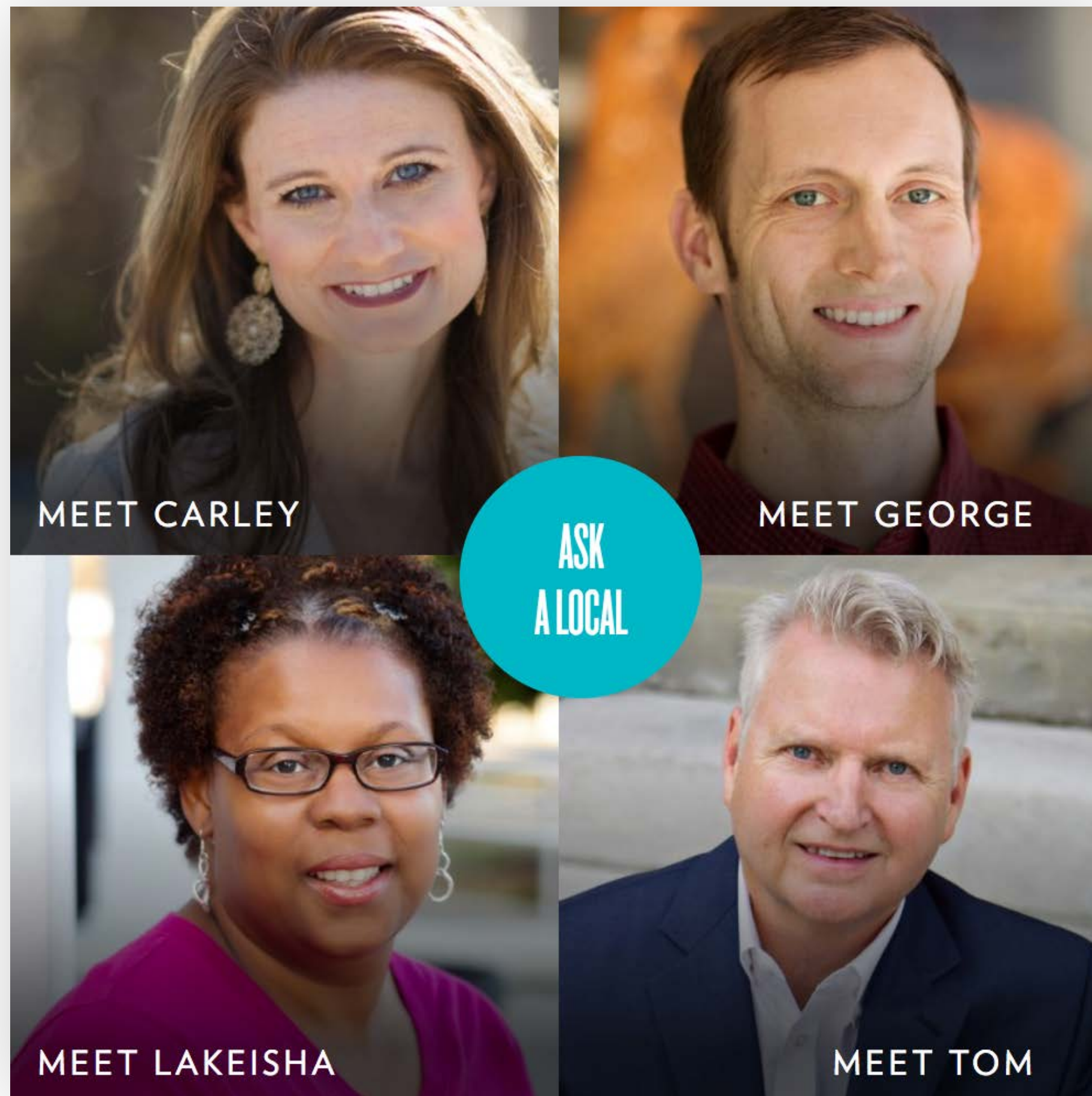
Ask a Local in Tupelo

Tupelo, Mississippi is best known as the birthplace of Elvis Presley.

Located in the center of the Mississippi Hills region, the Tupelo CVB markets the city to both business and leisure travelers with its offerings around music, literature, history and architecture.

Tupelo brings their small city hospitality to life online through their Ask A Local feature. Placed prominently on their homepage, their top level site navigation and throughout their website, Ask A Local gives website visitors the opportunity to ask questions directly to a rotating group of locals.

Each local is profiled on the Tupelo's website, and answers questions on everything from their favourite Elvis song to a recommendation for dining in a particular neighbourhood. Answers are listed on the website alongside visual links to partner pages deeper in the site.



15 Visit Franklin

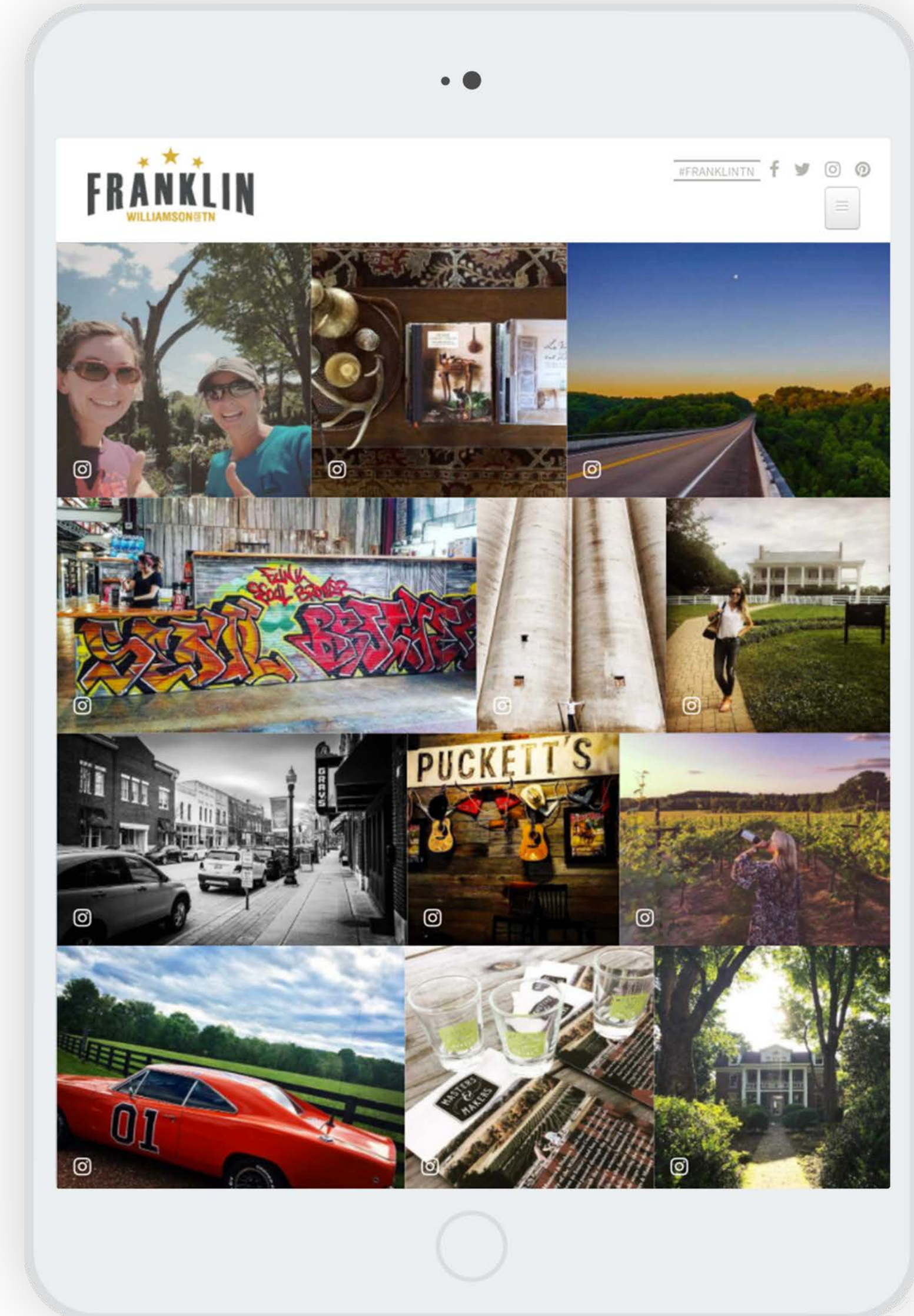
Like all smaller DMOs, Visit Franklin knows how it feels to be a little fish in a big pond.

Rather than viewing larger DMOs (with deeper pockets) as tough competition, they subscribe to a “culture of abundance”, according to Josh Collins, Digital Communications Manager at Visit Franklin.

Visit Franklin partners with nearby destinations and encourages ‘super users’ who love the brands to continue sharing lots of content.

Visual marketing plays a big role in building a sustainable brand and providing engaging experiences. Visit Franklin achieves this on its homepage and social media profiles by curating visuals that capture the atmosphere of its destination.

Josh sees the Visit Franklin brand as an experience, not a logo, and reflects this through the exceptional visual storytelling on their website, blog and social media channels.



16

Go NOLA

GoNOLA is the official content hub for the Visit New Orleans social media brand. The site gives visitors a look at some of the city's lesser known experiences, to encourage people to explore beyond well known city landmarks.

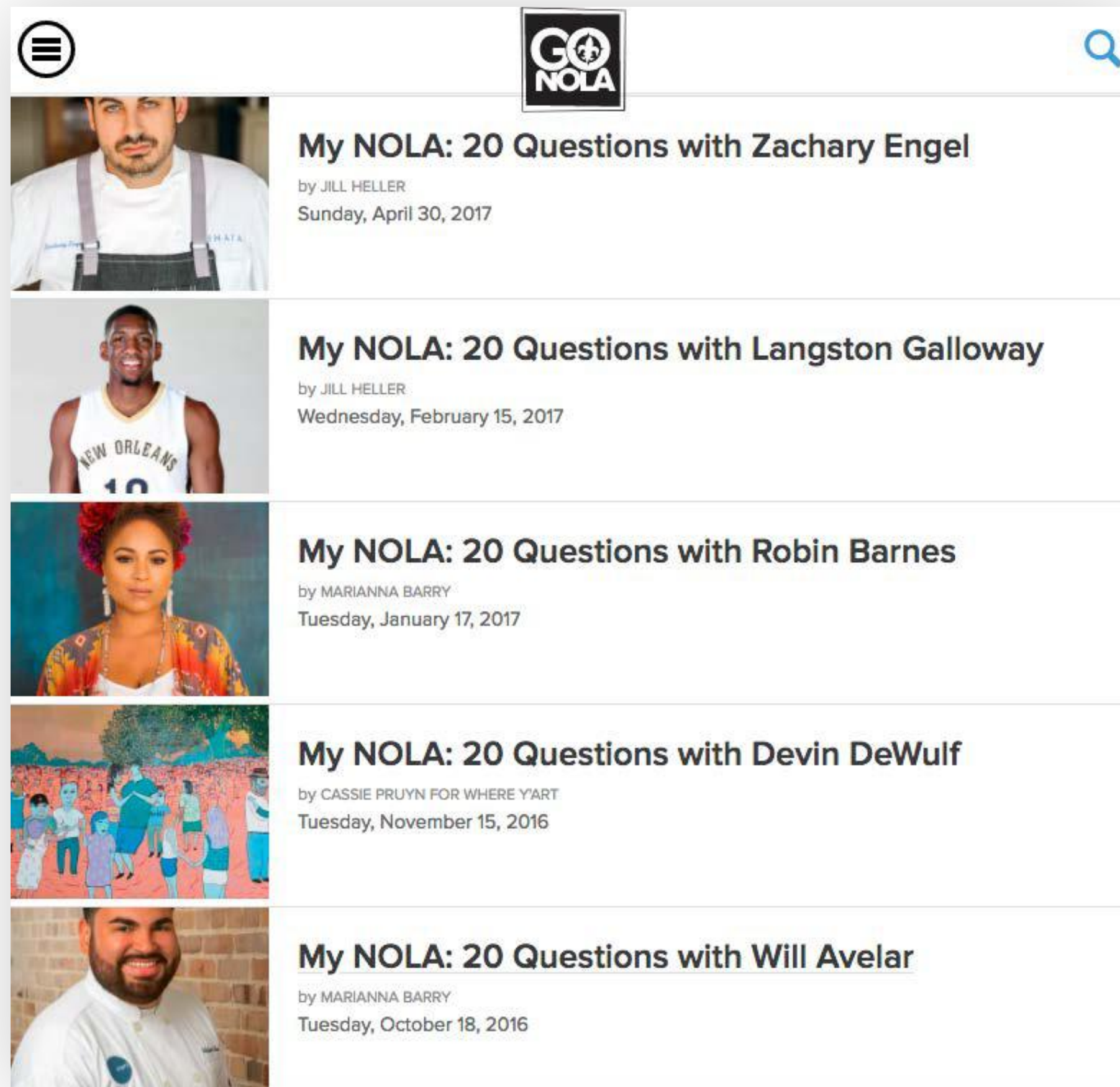
Their monthly My NOLA feature puts the spotlight on locals from sports celebrities to artist and chefs.

This culture guide is a visual feast, packed with video, photography and great storytelling, all in a responsive mobile optimized site.

What makes this marketing initiative worth paying attention to is how the GoNOLA team amplifies its content through paid social ads on Facebook and Instagram.

The result? An increase of nearly 25 million impressions in 2016 compared with 2015 and 1 million more engagements in the same period. The site's valuable content and smart SEO strategy is reflected in its organic traffic surpassing 2 million website visits and 3 million page views in the last year.

Whatever your interest, and whether you are a local or a visitor, GoNOLA has positioned itself as the authority on all things New Orleans and a model for digital marketing and visual storytelling.





“In our approach, visuals are one of the biggest keys to our success. We are not looking for a transaction between visitors. We want to inspire people to want to visit and ultimately develop a relationship with them.”

Josh Collins

Digital Communications Manager
Williamstown County CVB

Sponsored Content

Tourism brands are partnering with everyone from influencers to mainstream publications to create content that extends their reach to new audiences.

17

#Share the Lex

Lexington, Kentucky is best known as the Horse Capital of the World and the Birthplace of Bourbon.

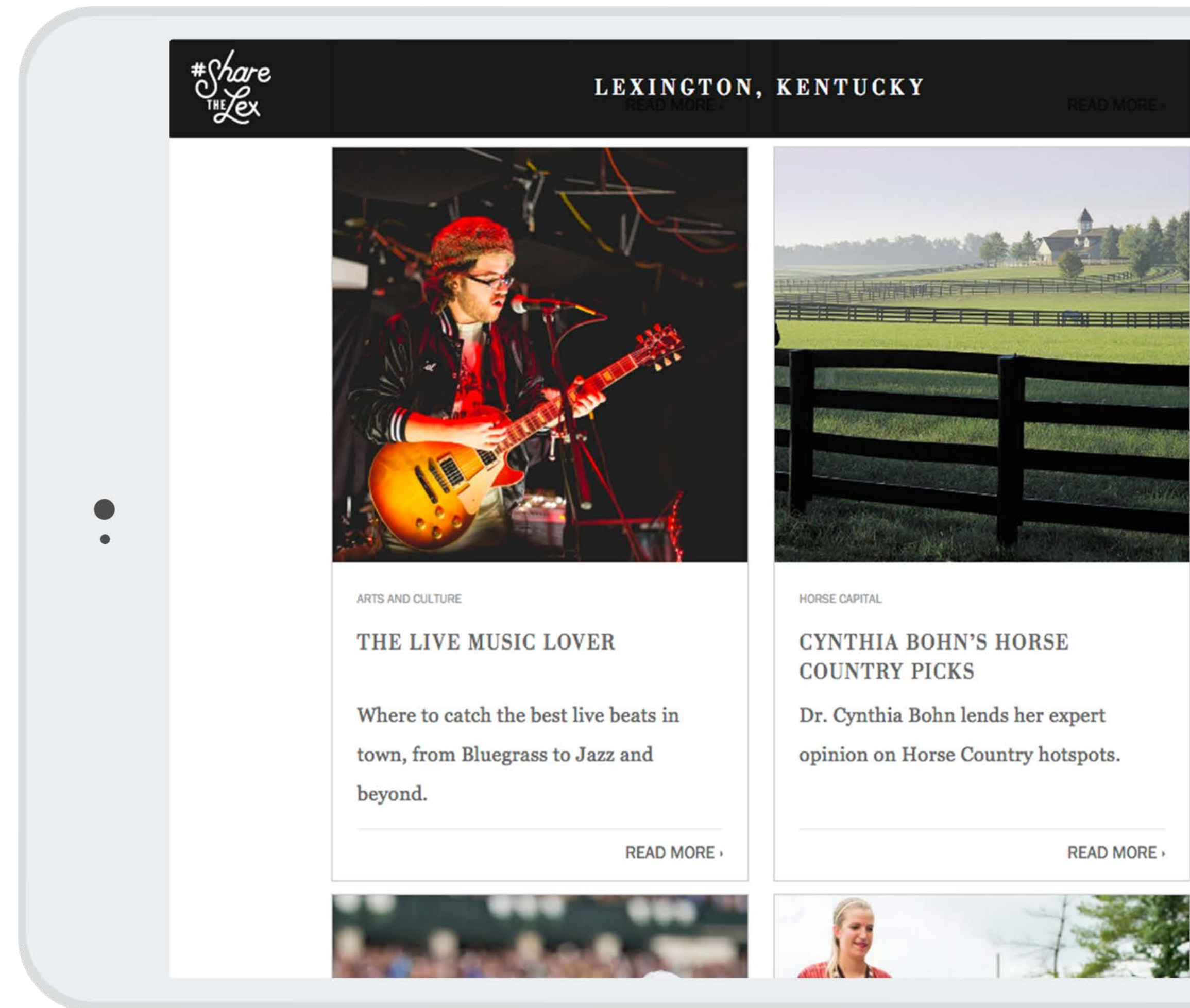
In order to showcase the friendliness of its locals and the full range of offerings for travelers, the Visit Lex marketing team wanted to put its locals and travelers front and center.

They launched a content site separate from their DMO website, and invited local influencers, bloggers, even local realtors to write about the destination.

The site is visually stunning and feels more like a travel magazine than a sponsored site.

Their website visitors agree, spending almost 5x longer on this website than on [VisitLex.com](https://www.visitlex.com).

While it may seem unusual to promote a 2nd website as a DMO, this engagement and traffic is paying off in the end, driving visitors to experience everything the city has to offer before embarking on their trip.



Napa Valley Like a Local: 5 Recommendations from Ryan MacDonnell & Emilio Alvarez



Ryan MacDonnell and Emilio Alvarez are longtime residents of the Napa Valley, where they work together on the olive oil cultivation at 450-acre Round Pond Estate. They're both raising families here and share an appreciation for the area's communal vibe and its abundance of kid-friendly outdoor activities and restaurants. We asked them to divulge some off-the-beaten-path recommendations, from a local sandwich institution to bike trails for cyclists of all levels.

Sponsored by Visit Napa Valley

EXPAND ALL PLACES +

01



Biking Local Hills and Highway 128

"I'm a cyclist and I love the scenery in the Napa Valley," says Emilio Alvarez, mill master at Ro...

[See More](#) ▾



02



Ciccio

"Ciccio is a small cozy

18 Napa Valley

The Napa Valley DMO marketing team partnered with AFAR magazine to do a sponsored content program.

They chose 5 experiences of what local people do with their families and invited longtime residents to share their recommendations on everything from bike trails to family activities to off the beaten path restaurants.

This content was produced by AFAR magazine and shared both in print and on the AFAR website.

The Napa Valley DMO started merchandising this content feature on their own and bought additional media to further promote it.

This sponsored content is also being repurposed into content for the Napa Valley DMO site.

The program was successful in generating awareness of Napa Valley to new audiences and driving relevant traffic to the Napa Valley DMO website.



19 Destination D.C.

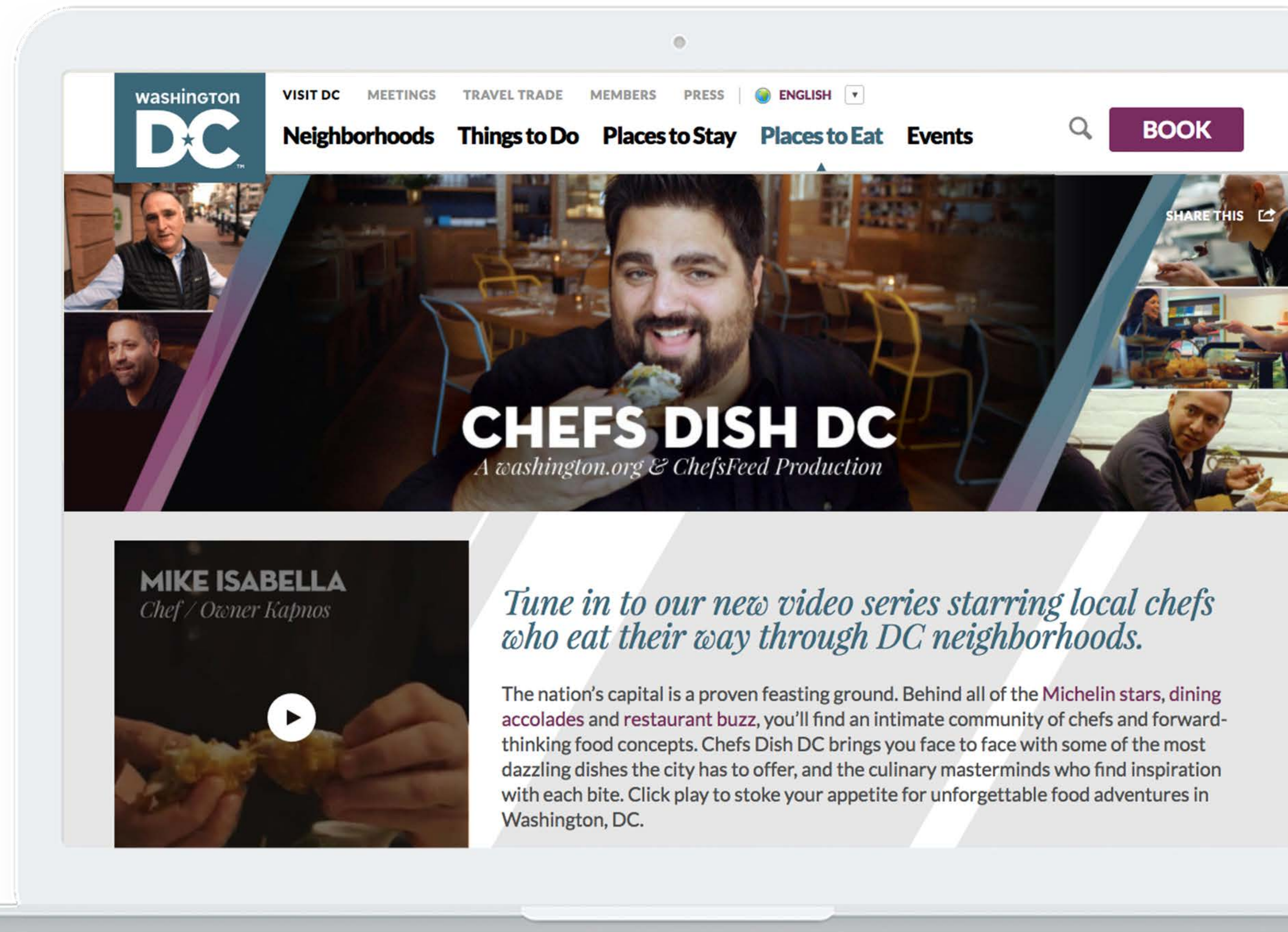
D.C. is already well known for its monuments, museums and of course its politics.

But the Destination D.C. marketing team wanted to highlight the city as a world-class dining destination.

They partnered with Chef's Feed to invite local chefs to show their favourite dining spots around the city.

The Chef's Dish DC series was born, and shared both on social media and the Destination DC website.

The D.C. marketing team was hoping for about 375,000 views and were pleased when they ended receiving well over 1.6 million, at an impressive 60% average completion rate.



20 How Choose Chicago Charmed a Toronto Food Writer

After watching some of food writer Suresh Doss's videos on Instagram, Choose Chicago's Director of Media Relations Melanie Perez invited him to attend a press tour during James Beard Eats Week.

Melanie not only created a comprehensive itinerary complete with photos (which is really what sold Suresh on the boat cruise), but also allowed him to partially customize his experience.

Another reason Suresh's press trip was so successful was that Choose Chicago hired the right people to talk about the right things.

For instance, Melanie hired a local tour guide for the boat cruise. Suresh was excited to find out what the different pockets of Chicago meant to a local and this personal commentary provided valuable content for his story.

Additionally, the food tour was led by a local foodie (someone who spoke their foodie

language!) instead of a representative from the DMO. They covered an impressive nine restaurants in five hours and the insights from their guide provided Suresh with a "thorough snapshot" of the different spots around Chicago.

He was also impressed by the amount of freedom his tour group was given at each restaurant. Typically, this type of event involves a set menu, so everyone eats (and photographs) the same dishes. Choose Chicago did things differently and allowed each influencer to order whatever they liked.

Choose Chicago recognizes the value of providing creative freedom to its visual influencers. By partnering with local businesses to deliver more authentic restaurant experiences, Choose Chicago empowered Suresh to create unique visual content that reflects his own impression of the city's food and culture.

CHOOSE
CHICAGO



© Suresh Doss



“The last thing you want when you’re on a press trip as a photographer is to take the same photo that everyone else is taking. And that happens a lot.”

Suresh Doss
Food Writer and
Print Editor, Foodism

Extra Special!

We didn't know how to categorize these last 2 examples, but they show out of the box thinking and excellence in execution. Enjoy!

21 The Sheepview in Faroe Islands

How did a small group of islands in the North Atlantic capture the imagination of the world and the attention of tech giant Google?

Through it's wooliest inhabitants, that's how.

This gets my vote for the most creative and clever campaign I've seen in the last year. Let me tell you the story.

Residents of the Faroe Islands were not too pleased that Google had overlooked them for its Streetview recordings. Durita Dahl Andreassen at Visit Faroe Islands found a clever way around this problem by strapping camera onto sheep and launching this project as Sheep View.

The campaign and its related videos received massive worldwide media coverage, so much so that it did in fact finally get on the radar of Google, who sent a team to the Faroe Islands to finally include the country in its Streetview.

The worldwide love for Sheep View lead Dahl to decide to continue to keep the camera on the sheep, where the footage shows a hilarious and less travelled path around the country.

Try and top this one!



Image credit: Visit Faroe Islands





22 Call Brussels

Tourism to the the City of Brussels came to a halt when a terrible bombing attack resulted in many lives lost and a standstill at its airport.

The DMO faced a huge uphill to convince visitors that the city was indeed safe for tourists and open for business.

It launched the Call Brussels initiatives, where 3 phones were installed in central Brussels, with signage encourage visitors to pick up the phone and call a local.

It opened up honest conversations for both tourists and locals, sharing both fears and assurances on a personal level.

In its first week, the campaign received tens of thousands of calls from visitors from around the world, and over 9 million impressions on social media.

Once again, Visit Brussels showed how the power of authentic connections can say more than the perfection of crafted brand messages.





TR-1268-L
YURI

Why 200+ DMOs use CrowdRiff for their visual marketing:

CrowdRiff is a visual marketing platform used by 200 destination marketing teams around the world.

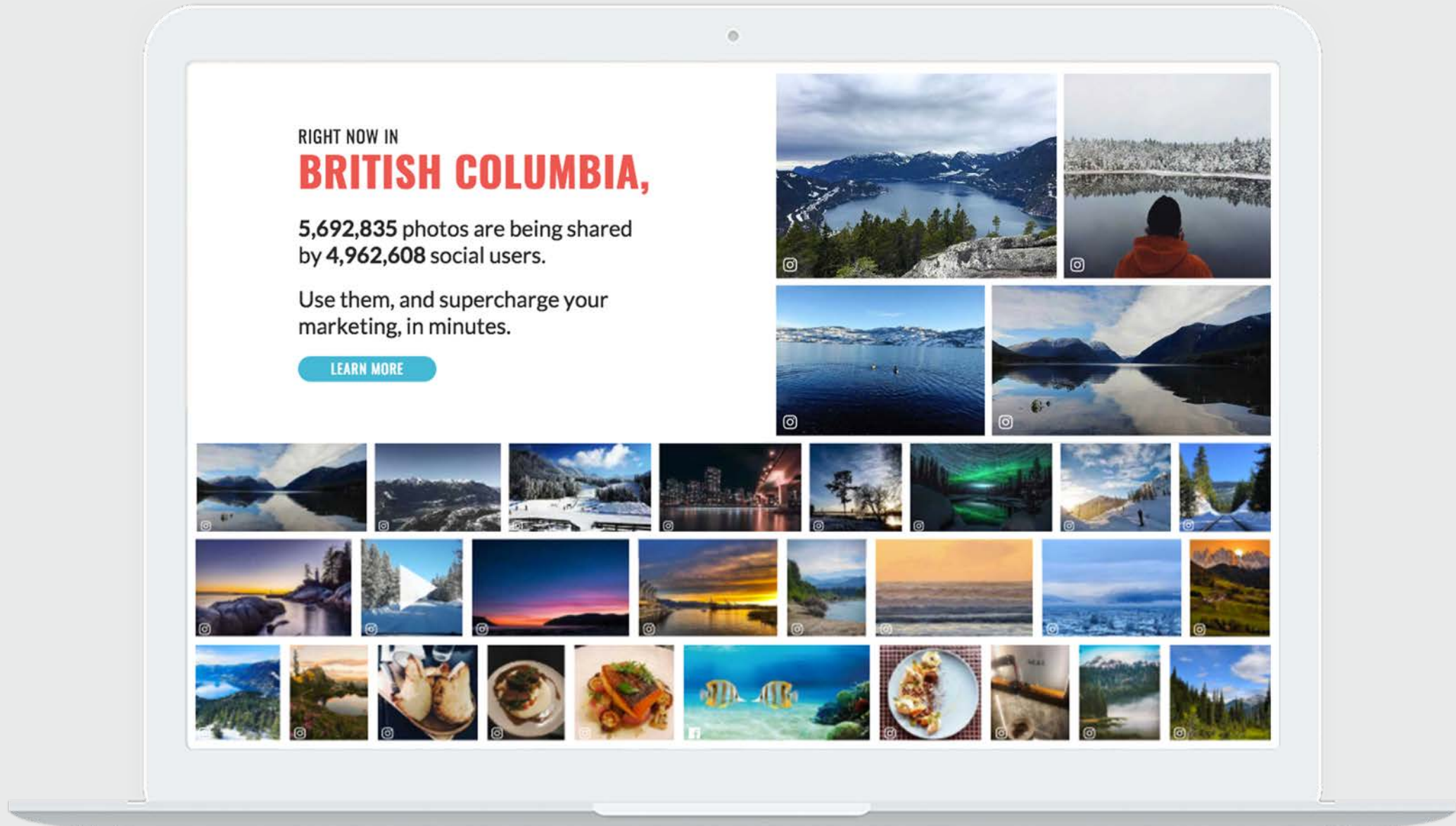
We are much more than a UGC platform - we help marketers:

- Source the best UGC visuals from the last 5 years
- Acquire rights to photos at scale using the industry's most advanced rights management system
- Use rights-approved UGC photos in digital ads, print campaigns and visitor guides
- Upload commissioned, stock and owned photography, all auto-tagged for easy search
- Manage both owned and UGC photos in a central web-based platform



Make your website work better for you

CrowdRiff can help you improve your marketing performance. Travel brands that use CrowdRiff's visual marketing platform see stats like:



Want to achieve stats like these on your website?

Book a demo today, and discover how CrowdRiff visual can transform your website into your greatest marketing tool.

[Book Your Demo](#)

Preview CrowdRiff for your Destination

Congrats — you've made it to the end of this ebook.

What Happens Now? That's Up to You!

We've lifted the curtain to show you a behind-the-scenes look at these creative travel brands, so you can understand what's possible for your destination, too. Refer back to these examples whenever you're looking for a different angle for a visual strategy, or need fresh ideas to help your team engage your following, and increase your customer base.

Curious to learn more about CrowdRiff, or want to work with us? Visit go.crowdriff.com/preview

Get Your Preview

