

WE THINK... • AUGUST 2015

A SOUNDTRACK IS AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A HOLIDAY



The right music in your hotel, restaurant or iPod can make the difference between an okay holiday and a truly memorable one, says Rob Wood, founder and creative director of [Music Concierge](#)

There's nothing worse than music that doesn't fit the situation. I was once asked to review a new boutique hotel in the Mediterranean. It was brilliantly conceived, with a really engaging design, great staff, lovely food and an incredible seascape setting. Yet in every area of the hotel they played Phil Collins endlessly, night and day.

God bless Mr Collins, but it was utterly off-brand and completely at odds with the boutique hotel experience – and the staff were oblivious. They'd paid so much attention to the visual aspects of the hotel, but had not considered how it sounded.

Whether it's a hotel, bar or restaurant, the music needs to be in line with the brand's personality, concept, audience and time of day. A good soundtrack should create the right atmosphere for a venue.

It's like a fantastic menu – if put together creatively, it can bring immense pleasure and spark a positive emotional response. And it's good for the brands, too. When people feel emotionally connected, the experience is more memorable.

There are some venues that really have got their soundtracks right. If you've ever visited [Sushisamba](#) in London, you'll have heard its excellent modern Brazilian-Japanese fusion sound. It's the same with hotels: guests love the relaxed soundtracks at [The Upper House](#) in Hong Kong and [The Connaught](#) in London.



Rob Wood

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A personal soundtrack is also important for holidays, because of the music/emotion connection. Hearing a song when you're on holiday naturally connects it with that experience. Next time you hear it, you're immediately transported back there. So before you fly, download some new, recommended releases. At the moment I like Digital, Melanie De Biasio and Flavia Coelho.

Remember that your destination and itinerary will influence what goes on the list. If you're walking in the French mountains, you'll want something different to chilling on a tropical beach.

If you need inspiration, wait until you arrive at your destination then explore the local music culture. I love checking out second-hand or independent record shops when I'm in a new city.

Of course, the way you listen to your personal soundtrack is just as important as what you listen to. Putting on headphones while you're with someone you know is pretty rude. Far better to crank up the sound system and listen to it together.