



**Category:** Best Publication

**Company:** Weber Shandwick

**Entry title:** Nocturne

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**Brief and objectives:**

The Caledonian Sleeper is unique. As the only overnight rail service in the UK, it carries with it a romance, a prestige and heritage that no other mode of transport in the country can match.

So when tasked by operator Serco to create a quarterly publication that lives up to this reputation, we knew our publication had to stand apart from the crowd.

Working with our client, we set the following objectives:

- Create a publication that would be as at home on the coffee table as on the Sleeper
- Showcase the stunning destinations guests can reach via the Sleeper and inspire future trips
- Help guests unwind and relax during their journey
- Create a publication that appeals to the Sleeper's broad audience.

**Rationale behind publication, including research and planning:**

Defining our audience was key. Working with our client, we analysed ticket sales, which revealed:

- A large number of guests were business travellers
- Almost all of those guests would use the Sleeper for leisure too, returning to spots where hillwalking, fishing and cycling are popular
- Families were regular users of the service

Supplementing that data, we ran two guest competitions to gauge exactly who was reading the onboard material. From that, we learned:

- **Families love the Sleeper**  
Teaming up with celebrated children's author Debi Gliori, we held a nationwide search to find the country's best storyteller under 12. We received *hundreds* of entries.
- **Luxury and Scotland are big draws**  
A competition to offer readers a luxury stay in Edinburgh or London received more than 800 entries, the majority of which specified Scotland's capital as their preferred destination.

We had determined that our audience liked the finer things, were keen to explore and often had young families. Those who did travel for business were open to returning for leisure.

By engaging directly with those motivations, we had an opportunity to truly inspire our guests – and encourage them to look to future trips aboard the Caledonian Sleeper.

Looking at our competition, we knew we had an opportunity to do something different and set a new standard in inspirational onboard travel magazines. As such, we looked at aspirational commercial magazines covering lifestyle, homes, walking/travel and sport and built a vibrant picture of what our publication should look like.

### **Strategy and tactics:**

Our research helped us realise our magazine had to look and feel authentic, the content should be assured, confident and composed. There should be variety, but never cluttered.

Most of all, the magazine should radiate with passion for the Sleeper's routes.

The content plan was key to helping us achieve that and to fit with our overall objectives. Each magazine should have:

- At least two inspirational photo-features per issue, conveying sights found along the Caledonian Sleeper route
- A recipe page featuring a Scottish chef and local ingredients
- A sport feature to tap into seasonal events and opportunities
- A restaurant guide, focusing on a location on the Sleeper route
- An 'Unseen Scotland' travel guide, taking people to the country's hidden gems
- Reviews of travel accessories and entertainment
- A family section for those travelling with children
- At least one high profile interview

As important as the content was the physical product – after an extensive testing process, we selected 150gsm uncoated stock, giving the magazine a real tactile quality.

Finally, the name. We developed a shortlist of 26 names and tested these with Sleeper guests, colleagues and our client. After an exhaustive process, Nocturne - meaning both a picture of a night scene and a short composition of a romantic nature – was selected.

### **Implementation of tactics:**

From the word go, we fixed our focus firmly on quality and developed a list of destinations ideal to feature in the magazine. Award-winning photographers were recruited to give us the quality images that provide added inspiration.

We then reached out to noted fans of the Caledonian Sleeper to secure the best celebrity interviews.

Household names such as Brooke Magnanti, Dougie Vipond and Denzil Meyrick leapt at the opportunity for an interview. Then, in September 2016, we secured an exclusive interview with world-renowned painter Jack Vettriano – his first since a broken wrist stopped him painting more than a year previously.

So fond of the magazine was he that Vettriano even allowed us to produce three different front covers, each featuring some of his most famous paintings, *Back Where You Belong*, *The Road to Nowhere* and *The Look of Love* – all with a travel theme. It was a tremendous endorsement of the publication and the epitome of an inspirational, coffee-table publication.

Soon afterwards, and having seen the Vettriano edition, the agent of Ian Rankin got in touch – “He loves the Caledonian Sleeper, and he’d love to be in Nocturne.”

All of this was achieved within the fixed timetable we’d established from the beginning, which allowed a full eight weeks of production time. The timetable for the current and next issue is as follows:

Issue no.	Review previous issue and comments	Confirm new content plan	Editorial deadline	Proofing deadline	Design deadline	Send to print
<b>Issue 5</b>	03/04/17	12/04/17	05/05/17	19/05/17	01/06/17	06/6/17
<b>Issue 6</b>	03/07/17	12/07/17	04/08/17	18/08/17	31/08/17	05/09/17

### **Measurement and evaluation:**

The client loves the magazine – so much so that they have increased its budget and pagination after each issue. From 40 pages in July 2016, the Summer 2017 issue sits at 56 pages.

In April 2017, we commissioned a reader survey. Over a three week period, we received 1,138 responses – and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 67.15% rating it 7/10 or above for quality.

- 60% said Nocturne informed them about Caledonian Sleeper destinations and 46% said it inspired future trips – meeting our key objectives. Meanwhile 47% said the magazine helped them unwind and relax on the train – meeting another objective
- 56% of readers said they thought the magazine was better, or significantly better than that offered by other modes of transport
- 75% of people said they were likely to read the magazine again, with nearly 30% saying they were certain to.

### **Budget and cost effectiveness:**

Not for publication