

# Global Hospitality

SEPTEMBER 2023 ISSUE

**Honorees**  
**2023 International**  
**Hospitality**  
**Hall of Fame®**

**Board of Judges**  
**International Hospitality**  
**Hall of Fame®**

**Gerard J.**  
**Inzerillo**

Group Chief Executive  
Officer, Diriyah Company  
Vice Chairman, Forbes  
Travel Guide

**VOICES**  
**AROUND**  
**the World**

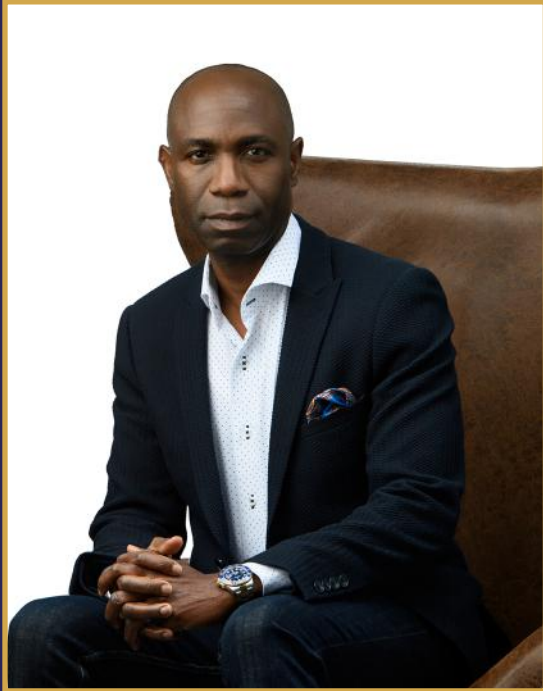
**100 Most**  
**Influential**  
**People in**  
**Middle East**  
**Hospitality**  
**& Travel**

 **PUBLISHED**  
**BY THE**  
**INTERNATIONAL**  
**HOSPITALITY**  
**INSTITUTE**

**World Travel Market**  
**SHOWCASE**



# THANK YOU.



Photograph by Natalie Roberson

Our September edition features the honorees, nominees, and judges of the 2023 International Hospitality Hall of Fame®. 2023's honorees were elected by our esteemed Board of Judges, comprising of 32 of the world's most respected leaders in hospitality.

This edition also features one of the most highly anticipated categories of the Global Hospitality Awards – the 100 Most Influential People in Middle East Hospitality and Travel. In furthering IHI's mission, we continue to recognize and celebrate leading change makers and influencers in the travel and hospitality industry. Although we were unable to feature the bios and photos of all honorees, we have listed all the honorees.

**Dr. Jeffrey O**  
**President**

**International Hospitality Institute**

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## GLOBAL HOSPITALITY MAGAZINE

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Celebrating hospitality excellence!

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Boca Raton Resort



Daniel Hostettler



Jerry Inzerillo

Due to space and editorial deadline constraints, we were unable to feature the profiles of all honorees of the 100 Most Influential People in Middle East Hospitality and Travel. Because we want to recognize and celebrate all winners, we have listed all honorees in the opening pages of the magazine.

# TICKET BOOKING OPENS FOR WORLD TRAVEL MARKET LONDON AS THE SHOW ANNOUNCES EXCITING CHANGES



Ticket booking is live for the global travel community's secure entry to the 43rd edition of World Travel Market London, the world's most influential travel & tourism event, which takes place between Monday 6th - Wednesday, 8th November 2023 at ExCel London.

Organisers are enabling visitors to book tickets well in advance of this year's show and have announced several new and exciting changes showing that the global travel community has the Power to Change travel.

After in-depth customer research carried out late last year, WTM London has announced a host of developments to improve the attendee experience and ensure that every member of the travel community extracts as much value from the event as possible.

This year, WTM London will open its doors earlier than usual - ready to welcome visitors from 09:30 am providing an additional hour for visitors and exhibitors to have spontaneous meetings.

Visitors are invited to make use of the new, open-for-all Community Hubs right in the centre of the show, and attendees can also look forward to an 'everyone's welcome' Networking Party that will take place within ExCel London on its first day, Monday 6th November from 5:30 pm-7:30 pm.

Developments include a new VIP badge to host senior industry leaders and a big-name, inspirational Closing Keynote on Wednesday, 8th November.

WTM Connect Me - the show's meeting booking platform - will return in 2023 and is available for Buyers, VIPs and Media. All attendees will also have access to the official WTM App, which returns this year with exciting new enhancements.

The conference programme will cover eight themes over three different stages throughout the three-day event. The eight conference themes are Sustainability, Technology, Geo-

Economics, Emerging Markets, Consumer Trends, Marketing, Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) and Experience and aim to help the global travel community succeed and thrive by informing, entertaining, and influencing their business decisions.

In response to the ever-increasing importance of influencers to the travel and tourism sector, on Wednesday, 8th November, content creators will be invited to a lunch with global destinations to support collaboration and networking opportunities.

In other changes the Ministers' Summit at World Travel Market in Association with UNWTO and WTTC, where dignitaries from around the world gather to discuss and ratify key tourism agreements, will return for its 17th year, and will take place on Day One, Monday 6th November.

The November show is set to launch its first Diversity and Inclusion Summit on Tuesday 7th, supporting WTM's belief that the travel sector has the power to evoke positive change in the world.

Tickets to the three-day show will be free until 31st October, after which there will be a charge of £45 per person. Organisers are encouraging early booking to ensure visitors take time to plan and maximise their visit.





Juliette Losardo, Exhibition Director, WTM London, said:

"We've been working behind the scenes to bring some exciting developments to World Travel Market this year. As the travel and tourism sector grows and changes, it's essential that WTM evolves to guide and support this change; a place for inspiration, for making plans and fixing issues, for diversifying thinking and hardening supply chains – it is our job to ensure the travel sector is equipped for the next chapter.

"Developments you'll see at WTM this year are entirely reflective of what our attendees are asking for. We're bolstering the ways you can maximise value from your visit, with more networking, better business opportunities, a refreshed education programme and a host of new partnerships.

"We're pleased to be opening ticket booking ahead of the summer and are committed to ensuring travel professionals have the best three days possible."

#### About the World Travel Market

World Travel Market (WTM) Portfolio comprises leading travel events, online portals and virtual platforms across four continents. The events are:

WTM London is the world's most influential travel & tourism event for the global travel community. The show is the ultimate destination for those seeking a macro view of the travel industry and a deeper understanding of the forces shaping it. WTM London is where influential leaders gather to exchange ideas, drive innovation, and accelerate business outcomes.

Next live event: 6 to 8 November 2023 at ExCel London

[www.london.wtm.com](http://www.london.wtm.com)





# wtm<sup>®</sup>

LONDON

6-8 November 2023



**INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INSTITUTE**

**100 MOST  
INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE**

**IN  
MIDDLE EAST HOSPITALITY  
& TRAVEL**

**2023**



# 100 MOST

## INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE EAST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL.

Listed in alphabetical order

Adel Mardini  
Ahmed Al-Khateeb  
Ahmed Bib Saeed Al Maktoum  
Ahmed Ramdan  
Akbar Al Baker  
Alison Grinnell  
Aloki Batra  
Amir Golbarg  
Amit Jain, Emaar Group  
Anil Thadani  
Anton Bawab  
Antonoaldo Neves  
Aradhana Khowala  
Bani Haddad  
Basmah Al-Mayman  
Bastien Blanc  
Cenk Unverdi  
Chadi Farhat  
Chadi Hauch  
Chris Nader  
Chris Newman  
David Todd  
Duncan O'Rourke  
Eleni Tsolakou  
Elif Yazoglu  
Elsa Lahoude  
Emanuela Setterberg  
Euan McGlashan  
Fahad Abdulrahim Kazim  
Fahd Hamidaddin  
Fernando Eiroa  
Guy Hutchinson  
Habiba Laklalech  
Haitham Mattar  
Hakan Ozel

Hala Matar Choufany  
Hana Al Rostamani  
Hussein Sherif Fahmi  
Ibrahim Koshy  
Imran Changezi  
Jaime Emiley Simpson  
Jaydeep Anand  
Jerry Inzerillo  
Joachim Schmitt  
Jochem-Jan Sleiffer  
John Northen  
John Pagano  
Jonathan Worsley  
JS Anand  
Judit Toth  
Julien Bergue  
Kabir Mulchandani  
Kamal Fakhoury  
Kamal Naamani  
Karim Abdelhamid  
Katerina Giannouka  
Khaled al-Anani (Minister  
of Tourism, Egypt)  
Khalid Anib  
Khalifa Bin Braik  
Lamia Kamel  
Louis Abi Abboud  
Marianne Fitzgerald  
Mark Kirby  
Mark Willis  
Marloes Knippenberg  
Melkart Rouhana  
Mohamed Ali Rashed  
Alabbar (Founder, Emaar)  
Mohamed Awadalla

Monther Darwish  
Muhamad al-Halifa  
al-Mubarak (Chairman,  
Aldar)  
Nader Ahmed Al Hammadi  
(Abu Dubai Aviation)  
Nadia Zaal  
Nadine Yetisener  
Nasser Matar Alkawari  
Nick Smith  
Nila Pendarovski  
Noelle Homsy  
Panchali Mahendra  
Panos Loupasis  
Paras Dhamecha  
Paul Bridger  
Paul Griffiths  
Prateek Kumar  
Rabih F. Feghali  
Raj Rana  
Raki Phillips  
Richard Haddad  
Sandeep Walia  
Sanjive Khosla  
Sharan Pasricha  
Simon Casson  
Sinan Koseoglu  
Sophie Blondel  
Sultan Al-Otaibi  
Sumair Tariq (R Hotels)  
Taleb Rifai  
Tamara Salha  
Tim Cordon  
Timothy M. Kelly  
Tom J. Roelens

# 100 MOST

**POWERFUL PEOPLE  
IN MIDDLE EAST  
HOSPITALITY AND  
TRAVEL**



**MELKART ROUHANA**  
**BEST-SELLING AUTHOR/LUXURY**  
**TIPSTER/CULTURE EXPERT/CX WHIZZ/**  
**INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER/**  
**ENGAGEMENT MAGICIAN**



**100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE  
EAST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL**

Looking to redefine the way you do business and the business you do. Look no further than Melkart Rouhana, the best-selling author of "Greatness is NOWHERE: Three Principles to Jazz up Your Culture, Pep up Your People, and Spice up Your Customer Experience". With his unshakable, pragmatic leadership and unparalleled expertise in culture, luxury, leadership, and the experience economy, Melkart is the go-to expert for organizations looking to make sustainable change and finish strong.

As the Chief Engagement Officer of MRT Consultants (A Boutique Luxury Consultancy House), Melkart has earned accolades from top institutions around the globe, including St Gallen University, who dubbed him "The Pope of Customer Experience", and Porsche executives, who called him "The Rock Star of Customer Service". He has even been referred to as "The Engagement Magician" by top hoteliers.

Melkart's "one-size-fits-one" learning and thinking solutions enable talent-based teams and organizations to shift toward greatness, and his philosophy has been recognized as foundational to the success of some of the world's most celebrated companies and institutions, including The Ritz-Carlton, Porsche, Mandarin Oriental, Mercedes-Benz, Four Seasons, Rosewood, UBS, W Hotels, Kempinski, Six Senses, Cleveland Clinic, St Regis, Emaar, Shangri-La, Raffles, Park Hyatt, Rixos, and more. A former corporate director of global learning at The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company and corporate head of learning and development for Emaar Hospitality Group and Armani Hotels and Resorts, Melkart now coaches on the Executive MBA program of London Business School and is the co-founder of the Culture and Performance Forum. He's also part of Talent Plus Global Advisors Network, which provides unprecedented access to masters of their industry who can help transform organizations.

Visit [www.melkartrouhana.com](http://www.melkartrouhana.com) for more videos and information on how Melkart can help you jazz up your culture, pep up your people, and spice up your customer experience. You can also visit:

[www.MRTconsultants.com](http://www.MRTconsultants.com)

**JAIME SIMPSON**  
**GENERAL MANAGER OF MINA**  
**A'SALAM, DUBAI**



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Jaime Simpson, originally from Australia, completed her Master's Degree in International Business and Hospitality Management at Oxford Brooks [United Kingdom] before entering the industry. She is a highly experienced hospitality professional, with over 20 years in the luxury hotel space, working in multiple hotel groups including Hyatt and Intercontinental Hotels in India, Japan, China, Thailand, Australia, New Zealand, Oman, and the UAE.

She is currently the General Manager of Mina A'Salam. Prior to joining Jumeirah, she was a General Manager with the IHG Hotel Group in Oman. Jaime is a dynamic international hotelier specializing in operations, protocols, and logistics. Her aim is to always inspire and lead successful teams that are focused on delivering service excellence on time and on budget. She is an expert in setting up frameworks for quality, standards, and procedures to ensure consistent delivery.

She was featured in Hotelier Middle East's "Top 25 Power Women in Hospitality 2020" and in Hotel and Catering News Middle East's "Top 40 Hospitality Heavyweights 2023" which is a true testament to her pioneering role in the hospitality industry.

She was awarded by Hotelier Middle East as the General Manager of the Year 2022 - High End Category and listed on the Hotelier GM Power List 2022. Recently, she also led the team at Mina A'Salam to be chosen by Hotelier Middle East as

the Hotel Team of the Year - High-End Category 2023.

Jaime is a mother, a wife, a colleague, and a true hotelier at heart.

## TOM ROELENS

GENERAL MANAGER AND SENIOR VICE  
PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS, ATLANTIS  
DUBAI



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Tom Roelens, General Manager and Senior Vice President, Operations Atlantis Dubai, has more than 25 years of international experience in the hospitality industry and has held senior management positions in North America, Middle East, Asia Pacific, Indian Ocean, and Europe.

Tom's position places him at the helm of Dubai's boldest and most innovative resort, Atlantis Dubai. Since his arrival in Dubai, he has overseen operations at Atlantis, The Palm, and Atlantis Aquaventure, now the World's Largest Waterpark, as well as the pre-opening and spectacular opening of Atlantis The Royal, Dubai's newest ultra-luxury entertainment destination icon.

Prior to joining Atlantis Dubai, Tom served in a variety of leadership positions spanning 20 years with the prestigious Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts around the world. Before joining Kerzner International in Dubai, he was responsible for the pre-opening and successful launch of Four Seasons Hotel and Residences in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A true pioneer, Tom also opened Four Seasons Resorts in the Maldives, managed operations at Four Seasons Hotel Newport Beach in California, The Regent Jakarta, Indonesia, and headed up the extensive transformation and complete re-imagination of Four Seasons Resorts in Lanai, Hawaii.

Tom started his career in fine-dining Michelin-starred restaurants in Belgium and France. His hospitality training started at Hotel School ter Groene Poorte in Bruges, and obtained an A1 Degree with Honours in Hotel Management in Belgium, before achieving his Postgraduate Degree in Public Relations and Media Management at Ghent University. Tom completed his education at Cornell University, School of Hotel Administration, with certificates in Hospitality Financial Management, Strategic Management, Hotel Real Estate Investments, and Asset Management.

Tom has served on the Pacific Asia Travel Association, Hawaii Chapter Board, and is currently serving on the Forbes Travel Guide Standards Advisory Committee, representing the Middle East and Africa Region.

*"Tom's position places him at the helm of Dubai's boldest and most innovative resort, Atlantis Dubai."*

## **EUAN MCGLASHAN**

### **GLOBAL CO-FOUNDER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**



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Following an award-winning career in luxury, resorts, independent, and branded hotels, Euan formed Valor Hospitality Partners in 2012 with longtime friend and business partner Steve Cesinger. Since then, Euan and his dynamic team have executed many distressed property turnarounds, new builds, and re-brandings, resulting in a highly-regarded reputation for the quality of the Valor execution both commercially and culturally.

In 2013, Euan and Steve purchased a U.K. operating platform, which today operates 36 hotels and resorts throughout Great Britain. Utilizing their unique brand of culture and results delivery, highlights of the U.K. work include taking an IHG portfolio of underperforming U.K. hotels to the number one operated franchise portfolio in Europe and throughout the entire estate; project managing multi-million-pound renovations, upgrades, rebranding; and the conception and development of 'High Street Retail' themed restaurants within select Hilton Hotels. In 2013, Euan formed PMR Hospitality Partners in Cape Town, South Africa with lifelong friends, Tony Romer-Lee and Michael Pownall, creating a bespoke, unique, full-service management company targeted at filling a huge need gap in the Sub-Saharan African hospitality market. In 2018, PMR became Valor Africa & Middle East turning Valor into what is now referred to as Valor Global with new office openings in Bangkok, Thailand, and Dubai.

Euan's vision for a truly bespoke global management company sharing resources, skills, and strategic thinking, as well as internally-created operating systems, procedures, and guidelines which Reimagine Hospitality has come to life with Valor Global now managing, asset managing advising, or consulting on over 80 projects around the world.

## **JULIEN BERGUE**

### **CO-FOUNDER & MANAGING PARTNER, MIDDLE EAST + CIS**



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Originally from Mauritius, Africa, Julien has been in the hospitality industry for 20 years and has dedicated his career to hotel project development for the past 17 years. During this time, he has been part of the development of various internationally recognized luxury hotels and mixed-use developments, which are some of the most iconic properties in the world.

Julien has over 17 years of international expertise directing significant mixed-used development, new hotel development, and refurbishment projects for both new and established luxury projects in countries across the Middle East and Europe, including the One & Only Hotel & Resort, Armani Hotels, the Address Hotels & Resorts, Nikki Beach Hotels & Resorts, and SLS Hotels Dubai.

Julien is a driven leader with exceptional communication and interpersonal skills, creating value through ensuring adherence to operational and functional guidelines and brand standards during development, accelerating project deliverables, maximizing asset design development, mitigating investment costs, and optimizing return on investment whilst accomplishing project objectives. Julien is an accomplished hotel individual poised to lead Valor Middle East.

**GERARD J. INZERILLO**  
**GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,**  
**DIRIYAH COMPANY**  
**VICE CHAIRMAN, FORBES TRAVEL GUIDE**



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Gerard “Jerry” Inzerillo is a globally celebrated Forbes-cover visionary in the hospitality and tourism industry, with a deep aptitude for positioning strategies and iconic developments. Over the course of his five-decade career in the industry, he has been a champion for the sector and its people, and the creative and logistical mind behind some of the world’s most innovative luxury brand activations and spectacular development launches.

In recognition of his leadership and empathetic outreach to the tourism community, he was awarded the prestigious HOTELS magazine “Corporate Hotelier of the World Award” as well as the “Tourism for Peace Award” by the World Association of Non-Governmental Organizations (WANGO), the latter honoring Inzerillo’s unique contributions to world peace by bringing people together through travel and tourism.

In 2023, President Joe Biden awarded Jerry the Presidential Volunteer Service Award and he was also the recipient of the Nelson Mandela Children’s Fund Lifetime Achievement Award.

In June 2018, Inzerillo was appointed by HRH The Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be the founding CEO of the newly created Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA). In January 2023, Diriyah was formally announced as a giga project under the Public Investment Fund. The USD \$63.2 billion project aims to develop 14-square kilometer area, encompassing world-class cultural, entertainment, retail, hospitality, educational, religious, office and residential assets, with the UNESCO World Heritage Site of At-Turaif as its anchor. In this role, Inzerillo is tasked with developing and implementing the master plan to turn Diriyah into one of the world’s greatest gathering places, restoring and reimagining the ancestral home of The First Saudi State.

At-Turaif was inaugurated by His Majesty, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud in November 2019, followed by hosting the G20 in November 2020 – the first time that the G20 has had its Presidency held by a Middle Eastern country.

When complete, the development will add 70 billion Saudi riyals to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s GDP, attract 50 million annual visits by 2030 and employ more than 170,00 people.

Inzerillo also serves as Vice Chairman of the Forbes Travel Guide. The Forbes Travel Guide Five-Star Award is universally accepted as the Olympic gold medal of Global Hospitality. As CEO of Forbes Travel Guide from 2014 to 2018, Inzerillo successfully spearheaded the globalization of the North American company’s international footprint to more than 100 countries worldwide.

Inzerillo was President and CEO of IMG Artists, the global leader in artist management, performing arts and lifestyle events planning, from 2012 to 2014. At IMG Artists, he directed global strategies for music, events, festivals, government consulting and artist and facility management businesses.

From 1991 to 2011, Inzerillo was president of Kerzner Entertainment Group, where he raised the profile and positioning of its properties in South Africa, the Bahamas, Dubai, Morocco, Mauritius, Mexico, and the Maldives, as well as conceptualized and positioned the start-up of its One&Only and Atlantis brands. He oversaw the now-legendary launches of The Lost City at Sun City in South Africa, Atlantis in the Bahamas and Atlantis, Dubai, the latter considered to be the most covered hotel resort opening of all time, including achieving the front cover of Time magazine.

From 1991 to 1996, Inzerillo served as COO of Sun City, the unique South African resort complex built by Sol

Kerzner. While in South Africa, he built a close personal friendship with President Nelson Mandela. In 1994, Inzerillo coordinated major portions of Mr. Mandela's Presidential inauguration in South Africa.

In 1987, he was the founding President and CEO of Morgans Hotel Group, later rebranded as Ian Schrager Hotels. While there, he conceptualized and opened Morgans, Royalton, and Paramount in New York; the Delano in Miami Beach; and Mondrian in L.A.

Throughout, Inzerillo's leadership has led to the conceptual success of breakout brands such as Atlantis, One&Only Resorts, Ian Schrager Hotels, Four Seasons, and Hilton Hotels.

In his personal life, Inzerillo has long been involved with philanthropy, especially with respect to children, educa-

tion, and HIV/AIDS. He was honored with a Knighthood by the Knights of Malta in Rome, Italy, in 1996. Inzerillo is also a founding advisory board member of the Clinton AIDS initiative.

Inzerillo is the recipient of a host of awards and distinctions, including a cameo role in the James Bond film, 'Casino Royale' in addition to being featured on the front cover of Forbes magazine.

Jerry Inzerillo is married to former CNN anchor Prudence Solomon. Their daughter, Helena Zakade Inzerillo, was named by her Godfather, Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Nelson Mandela. Inzerillo resides in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and New York City.

## MR. SULTAN BADER AL-OTAIBI

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
– DUR HOSPITALITY



100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE  
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Mr. Sultan Bader Al-Otaibi, the Chief Executive Officer of Dur Hospitality, is an inspirational visionary and impactful leader within the Middle East's hospitality industry with a proven track record of excellence in finance and asset management.

With over 22 years of experience in various managerial and leadership roles at Dur Hospitality, Al-Otaibi has stood out for his numerous achievements. Having formerly held the position of Vice President of Property & Asset, he demonstrated his far-sighted strategic planning and astute decision-making by maximizing the returns of the company's real estate assets portfolio.

As the General Manager of Makarem Hospitality Group, Al-Otaibi oversaw the overall management of the Group's properties (Hotels and Resorts) to guarantee seamless operations, harnessing his organizational and team management skills to ensure adherence to world-class hospitality standards.

Recognized for his accomplishments in the industry, Mr. Sultan has been featured in Hotelier Executive Power List, while also being listed among the Forbes Top 50 Travel and Tourism Leaders. Moreover, he is widely respected for his active engagement and valuable contributions as a member of the Tourism Committee at the Riyadh Chamber of Commerce.

Al-Otaibi has been distinguished as a successful and influential figure at Dur Hospitality for his outstanding capabilities and vast experience in the field, leading by example and steering the company to new heights in aims to achieve the strategic objectives of the company that are in line with the goals of Saudi Vision 2030.

**JOHN NORTHEN**  
**VICE PRESIDENT OF HOTEL OPERATIONS**  
**- PIF PROJECTS**  
**PUBLIC INVESTMENT FUND, KINGDOM**  
**OF SAUDI ARABIA**



**100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE  
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John's illustrious journey, spanning over 30 remarkable years, bears testimony to his relentless pursuit of growth and excellence. A magnate in the hospitality and healthcare sectors, John's forte lies in identifying lucrative growth opportunities, spearheading pivotal hotel openings, and crafting strategic Hotel Management Agreements.

Under John's visionary leadership, organizations have flourished, demonstrating remarkable innovation and sustainability initiatives. His propensity for fostering collaborative environments has not only driven business growth but also nurtured a culture of excellence and inclusivity.

From his transformative role as Area Vice President of Marriott International, where he ingeniously orchestrated property expansions in Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, to steering Columbia Asia Healthcare to new heights as the Group CEO, John's leadership has

been nothing short of monumental. During his tenure, he initiated several community outreach programs that have left a lasting impact, echoing his belief in corporate social responsibility.

His tenure at the Shangri-La Group witnessed him championing strategic investments and developments, notably expanding the company's foothold in Europe, the Middle East, India, and the Indian Ocean Region. At Shangri-La, John also spearheaded groundbreaking sustainability initiatives that have set new benchmarks in the industry.

Moving forward, John served as the leading figure in the hotels and resorts division at the Royal Commission for AlUla in Saudi Arabia, where he sculpted a legacy of unprecedented growth and prosperity, drawing from his invaluable experience in the Kingdom, including his role as Executive Director at NEOM.

Currently, as the Vice President of Hotel Operations - PIF Projects, John continues to drive the industry forward, setting new standards of excellence in the region's hospitality sector.

John's transformative influence in the industry has been recognized widely; over the past three years, he has been named one of the most influential executives in the Middle East for three consecutive years and has been listed among the most influential industry executives in KSA. Moreover, he was recently honored as a finalist for the "Hotelier Middle East Trailblazer of the Year" award, a testament to his unwavering commitment to innovation and progress.

*"His propensity for fostering collaborative environments has not only driven business growth but also nurtured a culture of excellence and inclusivity."*

## ELSA LAHOUE

### GENERAL MANAGER, ME DUBAI



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With an unwavering passion for the hospitality industry and a strong commitment to excellence, Elsa Lahoue is an accomplished General Manager known for her exceptional leadership and remarkable result-driven hotelier approach. With a wealth of experience in the industry, Elsa brings a unique blend of expertise, creativity, and meticulous attention to detail to ME Dubai's dynamic and contemporary hotel.

Bringing with her over 27 years of experience in managing luxury properties and hotels in Europe and in the Middle East, Elsa's diverse background has equipped her with an in-depth understanding of all facets of hotel operations, including financial and cost management, revenue innovation management, guest services, and

strategic planning. Elsa's career in hospitality began over two decades ago, where she quickly established herself as a rising professional through her dedication and exceptional work ethic. She steadily climbed the ranks, holding various management positions in prestigious hotels and resorts in France, UK, the Maldives, and the Middle East.

Prior to her current role at ME Dubai, Elsa served as Director of Rooms at the Mandarin Oriental in Bodrum, where she led the team during its successful re-opening, as well as at Cheval Blanc Randheli in the Maldives, where she oversaw all aspects of the guest experience during its opening. Elsa also previously worked at Hotel Missoni in Kuwait as Director of Rooms and spearheaded MERAAS Holding's Bluewaters Hotel during its pre-opening as Hotel Manager, where she gained valuable expertise in luxury hospitality operations, revenue management, strategic planning, and budgeting, making her an esteemed asset within the hospitality management industry.

Known for its world-class amenities and award-winning design by the late Zaha Hadid, ME Dubai has been a beacon of excellence and innovation in the region, and with Elsa's tenure, she has led by example and fostered a culture of excellence, inspiring her team to deliver unparalleled service and one-of-a-kind experiences to the ever-competitive hospitality industry in the UAE. With a great passion for learning and innovation, Elsa stays abreast of the latest industry trends and advancements, constantly seeking ways to enhance the guest experience and improve overall hotel performance.

As ME Dubai's General Manager, Elsa seamlessly combines her extensive experience, strategic mindset, and passion for exceptional service to create a truly extraordinary experience. Her commitment to innovation, creativity, and cultural involvement makes her an invaluable asset to the hotel and a respected leader in the hospitality industry.

*"...and with Elsa's tenure, she has led by example and fostered a culture of excellence, inspiring her team to deliver unparalleled service and one-of-a-kind experiences to the ever-competitive hospitality industry in the UAE."*

## CHRIS NADER

### CO-FOUNDER OF ENVI LODGES



100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE  
EAST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL

Chris was born into a family of hoteliers and he started working at the family-owned Yacht Club very young. While learning the trade hands-on, he developed his lifetime passion for extreme sports. But it was not until his early twenties that Chris experienced the synergy between travel and adventure, embarking on a three-day expedition kayaking with whales in Canada. That immersive experience only encouraged him to push his career in hospitality and after an MBA at the Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne in 2008, Chris joined the team that launched Shaza Hotels in Geneva. He eventually moved to Dubai to lead the company's international growth. From 2014 to 2017, he was also the Vice-President of Development for Kempinski Hotels covering Africa and the Middle East.

It was while living in Switzerland that Chris discovered the world of experiential lodging at an eco-luxury camp in the Swiss Alps. 10 years later, he finds himself launching a new eco-lodge brand of his own. ENVI Lodges combines his love for adventure, his passion for creating meaningful experiences, and his ambition to promote responsible hospitality.

## NOELLE HOMSY

### CO-FOUNDER OF ENVI LODGES



100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE  
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Imagining she would one day design her own little hotel and retire on a Greek Island, Noelle studied architecture and ended up building an unconventional career. Starting with architectural design and construction project management, she later handled claims, risk management, and arbitration cases for real estate projects in the Middle East. A born multitasker, she also earned a Masters in Engineering Management from the American University of Beirut and a certificate in Negotiation and Dispute Resolution from Harvard University -all the while, Noelle was still looking for a way into the hotel world.

In 2017, Noelle moved to Singapore for her MBA, and traveled around South East Asia, visiting multiple eco-luxury camps in the region. After graduating from INSEAD, Noelle jumped at the opportunity to enter the hospitality industry, taking on a role in luxury hotel development with a focus on experiential lodging. During that time, she successfully signed 4 lodges in the UAE and moved on to lead the hospitality and tourism practice at Grant Thornton UAE. Her passion for watching hotels come to life combined with her love for responsible tourism finally led her to launch ENVI Lodges.

*“...she later handled claims,  
risk management, and  
arbitration cases for real estate  
projects in the Middle East.”*

## JUDIT TOTH

### FOUNDER AND CEO OF VIVERE HOSPITALITY



100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE EAST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL

Judit Toth is the Founder and CEO of Vivere Hospitality and the creator of INK Hotel brand. Vivere Hospitality is a forward-thinking innovative company specializing in hospitality concept development and operations

management across different hospitality verticals. With extensive hospitality management experience and a strong focus on sustainability, Vivere's strength lies in the vision of its Founder; to develop purpose-driven brands while creating long-term value.

The success of Vivere's operation is achieved by an in-depth understanding of market conditions, strategic positioning, feasibility studies, and brand development along with unparalleled operational and management services. Vivere's INK Hotel is a sustainable award winner boutique hotel brand, operational in Dubai since January 2022. INK Hotel was developed with the idea of creating a brand that focuses on three key pillars; sustainability, collaboration, and empowerment. As the first-of-its-kind boutique hotel concept, Vivere's scope is to manage the entire hotel takeover, starting with the pre-opening management and rebranding of the property until successful launch and ongoing operation. Judit currently serves as General Manager of INK Hotel and actively consults on local and international assignments in the hospitality space.

She has 14 years of experience in hospitality, real estate, and business management. She has previously worked with prominent firms like Jumeirah Group and Dubai Properties where she contributed to the success of iconic hotels and destinations. Judit holds an MBA in International Hospitality Management from The Emirates Academy of Hospitality Management and a FinTech certification from INSEAD Business School. With these accreditations, she is combining her passion for Hospitality and fintech by focusing on bringing new technologies to hotel management.

## HALA MATAR CHOUFANY

### PRESIDENT, HVS MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA, & SOUTH ASIA



100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE EAST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL

Hala Matar Choufany is the President for HVS Middle East, Africa & South Asia, and Managing Partner of HVS Dubai. Hala is an experienced Managing Partner and Hospitality Advisor with a demonstrated history of working in the hospitality industry. Skilled in Contract Negotiation, Feasibility Studies, Development Recommendation, Valuation, Asset Management, and Strategic Advisory; she has advised on more than 4,000 hospitality and mixed-use projects in the last 19 years across Europe, MEA, and Asia.

Hala has in-depth expertise in regional hotel markets and broad exposure to international markets and maintains excellent contacts with developers, owners, operators, investment institutions, and government entities. Hala speaks frequently at investment conferences on a range of topics including tourism investments, asset valuation, management issues, and women's leadership. Hala completed Executive Education at Harvard Business School. She also holds an MBA in Finance and Strategy from IMHI (Essec-Cornell) University, Paris, France, and a BA in Hospitality Management from Notre Dame University, Lebanon. Hala is fluent in English, French, and Arabic. Hala is a board member of the Harvard Business School Club of the GCC and is a mum of three. Born in Beirut, Hala lived and worked in a number of cities across Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.

# SOPHIE BLONDEL

## GENERAL MANAGER, THE H DUBAI



100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE  
EAST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL

The passionately driven and highly experienced Sophie Blondel is a seasoned hospitality professional and General Manager at The H Dubai. Having spent over two decades in the hospitality industry, Sophie has spent a significant amount of time learning the most intricate details of the profession and mastering the art of serving guests with excellence. Her impressive experience coupled with her passion for the work she does has brought her to the position of managing operations at the prestigious The H Dubai on Sheikh Zayed Road, Dubai.

Initially a law student, Sophie had a change of heart after completing her law degree from Université de Rouen, Haute-Normandie. While her inclinations always bent towards serving people to the best of her ability, she soon realized that a career in hospitality could help her further that interest better than a law practice. She therefore took the brave step of side-stepping into hotel management and earned her master's in hospitality administration from the prestigious Vatel International Business School in France. While she was fortunate to have found her calling, through her study of law she learned valuable skills such as analysis, working under pressure, conflict resolution, rigor, organization, time management, and problem-solving, all of which have been handy throughout her career.

After graduating from Vatel, her career propelled into a long line of working with marquee names where she

learned the nitty-gritty of the world of hospitality. Having spent the first 15 years of her career in Belgium, Sophie had long stints with several hotels in Brussels and surrounding regions, including names like Thon Hotels, Sofitel, and Radisson Hotel Group. These years of serving across multiple designations helped her fulfill her passion and deepened her interest in restaurants, interior design, and leadership.

In 2019, she first set foot on UAE soil and joined the InterContinental Hotels Group on Abu Dhabi's Yas Island as Hotel Cluster Manager. After just a short period of time spent understanding the difference between European and Arabian hospitality, her talents were widely recognized, and she was invited to come on board as the General Manager of the iconic The H Dubai. Having been associated with the brand for over three years now, Sophie has brought in immense value and bagged the hotel multiple awards under her leadership. Her cross-cultural experience from her time in Europe and now in the UAE helps her understand the global tourist mindset, international market trends, and financial intricacies, all of which she applies to perfection in her role at The H Dubai.

When speaking of her passion for hospitality and what it takes to stick it out in this brutal field for all these years, Sophie attributes her success to attention to detail and the willingness to please. The most important thing she has learned from her 20 years of providing luxury-lifestyle experiences is that a high standard of quality must be at the center of each project and is essentially what sets a brand apart. Her entrepreneurial mindset enables her to ensure that the owner's interests are looked after just as well as those of the guests. She is therefore constantly striving to achieve the maximum output from an investment or innovation.

Extremely passionate about the overall growth and welfare of the team, Sophie shares a great rapport with the many employees working under her. She is known to remain connected with all the departments, regularly takes her rounds, and personally converses with all team members. All employees are very welcome into her office, with any ideas, suggestions, or any other matters that may be on their mind.

A highly creative individual, Sophie enjoys several hobbies and lives a life of creative and professional fulfillment. A loving mother, a passionate off-roader in the UAE winters, and someone who sews passionately in the summer months, she thoroughly enjoys her personal pursuits while always being conscious of giving her best in her professional life. She has huge aspirations for The H Dubai, where she is always looking to improve the guest experience, embrace the opportunities posed by the post-pandemic context, and transform the property to ensure that it has something extraordinary to offer at every turn. Sophie wears multiple hats with the utmost passion and dedication, and with her at the helm, The H Dubai is in extremely competent hands.

## PANCHALI MAHENDRA

### PRESIDENT, ATELIER HOUSE HOSPITALITY



100 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN MIDDLE  
EAST HOSPITALITY AND TRAVEL

Panchali Mahendra's journey is one of perseverance, indomitable will, and an unwavering commitment to empowering women in the food and beverage industry. Her upbringing was nomadic in nature, due to the transferable nature of her father's job, but it was punctuated with excellence in academics, art, and sports, which culminated in her selection to represent her state and play nationals and be a part of India team for basketball at the young age of 16. In addition, Panchali possesses an inherent acumen for design and art, particularly in the realm of charcoal painting.

Her true calling, however, was in the world of hospitality, which fueled her passion to pursue her education in the same field at one of India's most prestigious hotel schools, IHM-Aurangabad. Graduating as a gold medalist, from the University of Huddersfield, UK and IHM Aurangabad India both in Hospitality Honors, Panchali got selected for the scholarship program and received her post-graduation certificate in hospitality Oberoi group of hotels (OCLD).

With more than two decades of experience, Panchali is a zealous advocate of the food and beverage industry, having worked on close to 70 restaurants across regions. In 2017, she opened Atelier House Hospitality under the guidance of Mr. Ahmass Fakahany, the CEO and Owner of Altamarea Group and AHH. Under Panchali's leadership, Atelier House Hospitality has cemented its place as a high-quality boutique player in the market, both

through developing and conceptualizing locally grown brands and bringing in international brands. Panchali has provided consulting and operational support for the local market and expanded a homegrown brand internationally.

However, Panchali's leadership and innovation in the food and beverage industry is not her only claim to fame. She is also a steadfast advocate for women's growth and development in the industry, actively participating in key mentorship programs. Her commitment to empowering women has garnered her several awards, including the coveted Golden Visa, making her the first woman to receive this recognition from the UAE government.

Panchali's unwavering dedication to the food and beverage industry has been acknowledged by the CMO Asia, who awarded her the "Women Leaders" accolade, and Caterer ME, who honored her with inclusion in their "Powerful Women List 2020, 21, 22, 23 along with 3 consecutive years in the power 50 list." Panchali's formidable contributions have also been recognized by the Hotel & Catering Award as an "Industry Heavyweight."

Panchali's story is one of unflagging determination, steadfastness, and a deep-seated commitment to empowering women in the industry. Her noteworthy successes are not mere happenstance but a result of her relentless efforts and dedication to excellence, both for herself and the women she strives to uplift. Her laudable work and leadership serve as an inspiration for women everywhere, as she works to promote a more diverse and inclusive food and beverage industry.

*Panchali has  
provided  
consulting and  
operational  
support for the  
local  
market and  
expanded a  
homegrown brand  
internationally.*

# MEET THE JUDGES

## OF THE 2023 INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME®.

32 OF THE WORLD'S MOST RESPECTED LEADERS FROM ALL OVER THE  
GLOBE, WORKING TOGETHER TO ADVANCE THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY.



## 2023 INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME®

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Bastien Blanc  
Calvin Tilokee  
Chip Rogers  
David Millili  
Dr. AJ Aluri  
Dr. Altaf Sovani  
Dr. Erinn Tucker-Oluwole  
Dr. Ethan Cheng  
Dr. Jeffrey O  
Dr. Peter Ricci  
Dr. Suzanne Bagnera

Emily Goldfischer  
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# PROFILES

## OF THE BOARD OF JUDGES

### 2023 INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME®



## ADELE GUTMAN

### HOST, GET GREAT GUEST REVIEWS PODCAST



During her 20-year tenure as Vice President of the Library Hotel Collection, the brand astonished the hotel industry by repeatedly earning the #1 highest guest satisfaction rating of any luxury hotel brand in the world, opening the #1 hotel in the world on TripAdvisor, and leading her four New York City ho-

## ALEX DALLOCCHIO

### CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, STARHOTELS FINANZIARIA GROUP



An award winner hospitality professional, with a history of achievement and providing solutions that produce immediate impact in the hospitality industry spanning 20 years of employment across different hotels and resorts in the USA and Europe. Known for building strong teams, improving bottom-line margins, and delivering results-driven success.

Alex is currently the Chief Operating Officer at Starhotels Finanziaria Group where he is responsible for the day-to-day operation of Starhotels growing portfolio of 30+ hotels located in the heart of the top Italian destinations, in addition to London,

tel teams to hold the four top placements in the city as well as national ranking.

Adele now serves the hospitality industry as a speaker and consultant on how to optimize efficiency and long-term revenue by creating a guest-centric culture. As the foremost authority on hospitality reputation marketing and guest loyalty, Adele has been honored as one of the Top 25 Most Extraordinary Minds in Sales & Marketing by the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International for achieving unprecedented results in driving revenue through Guest Experience, Reputation Optimization, and Culture.

With her podcast and LinkedIn Newsletter, Get Great Guest Reviews, Adele was humbled to be recognized with some impressive awards from the International Hospitality Institute including 100 Most Powerful People in USA Hospitality, Top 35 Hospitality Podcasts, and Top 25 Hospitality Social Media Influencers. Adele is also a proud graduate of the University of Houston's Conrad N. Hilton College of Global Hospitality Leadership and an active member of the Eric Hilton Distinguished Alumni Club at Hilton College.

Paris, and New York, with more than 4,200 rooms.

Alex oversees Starhotels Operational team across all disciplines while also interacting directly with their portfolio of hotels, the Corporate Office, and other ownership representatives.

Prior to his corporate leadership role with Starhotels, Alex worked in several executive leadership positions in independent, luxury, and lifestyle hotels including the famed Beverly Hills Marriott and the Westin London City where he was General Manager and MD for several years. Prior to this, Alex held executive leadership positions in the USA, UK, and Europe with Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, and several independent hotel collections where he was directly responsible for branding, re-positioning, and creating a business plan to increase real estate value.

Alex sits on several major brands' advisory boards and he is an active volunteer of a few charitable organizations around the world, frequently participating in community service acts together with his hotels and teams. Alex and his wife Michelle have two children and reside in Florence, Italy.

Key career achievements include;

- 2022 Global Hospitality Award Winner
- Named 2022, Top 100 Most Powerful People in Europe's Travel & Hospitality by The International Hospitality Institute
- 2017 Remington Hotels GM of the Year
- 2017 Remington Hotel of the Year Nominee

## ANDREA BELFANTI

CEO, INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF HOSPITALITY CONSULTANTS (ISHC)



Andrea Belfanti is the CEO of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants (ISHC), The Leading Source of Global Hospitality Expertise, represented by the industry's most respected hospitality professionals worldwide. Andrea has been with ISHC since 2009 and has over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry with previously held positions at IHG and in a variety of hospitality sectors. She is a regular speaker and presenter at industry events and currently serves on the planning committees for numerous hospitality investment conferences. Andrea co-founded the ISHC & Questex Diversity and Inclusion Council is the Podium Committee Chair and serves on the Marketing Committee for the Castell Project. Andrea sits on the Advisory Board for the University of South Carolina's School of Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism Management, where she earned her bachelor's degree.

ISHC is a professional society with over 200 members with work experience in over 60 countries. Membership is by invitation only and members are owners, principals, directors, and/or officers in their firms and are leaders in the industry in their respective areas of expertise.

## ARADHANA KHOWALA

CHAIRWOMAN, GROUP ADVISORY BOARD, RED SEA GLOBAL



Aradhana Khowala is a global authority on the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries and has over two decades of experience across 75+ countries on five continents. She is currently CEO of Aptamind Partners a Private Client Advisory that is a trusted advisor to ambitious leaders in Governments, Family Offices, Private UHNW Investors, and International Organizations. Previously she was the Managing Director of Tourism at NEOM - the US\$ 500 Billion land of the future purpose built for a sustainable and new way of living in Saudi Arabia.

An experienced Board Member, she has an active portfolio of Board roles and currently serves as the Chairwoman of the Group Advisory Board of the Red Sea Global in Saudi Arabia which includes the Red Sea and AMAALA "giga" projects of Vision 2030 among others. Aradhana also serves as a Board Member and Steering Committee member of the World Tourism Forum Lucerne in Switzerland which is a highly focused, top-level, strategic body that brings together selected leaders around the world to reflect on the big challenges facing the industry and she is also a Board Member of Elaf Group, the leisure arm of a sustainable listed hold-

ing company - SEDCO. In the past, she has worked for Jones Lang LaSalle, covering the UK, Benelux, and Scandinavian markets, a Strategy Consulting practice in Europe and Asia as well as in Hospitality Operations in India.

Aradhana has won multiple awards including being the 25 most Influential Women in Hospitality in 2022 by IHI. In 2021 she was featured as an Inspirational woman rethinking a sustainable future of tourism by City Nation Place in the UK and won the Chairman's Award of Global Chamber of Commerce for being a leader amongst peers. She won the 21st Century Icon Awards in 2017 in association with CNBC and London School of Economics as an Inspirational Game Changer and in 2014, she was featured as one of the 50 most Influential Next Generation leaders who will define the future by Swiss Economic magazine Bilan (Forbes equivalent). She was also

recently elected as a Fellow of the International Institute of Hospitality Management.

A resolute advocate of women's empowerment, diversity and inclusion and an activist for education as an agent of change, she spends a lot of her time engaging Presidents, Prime Ministers and Tourism Ministers lobbying for travel and tourism as a force for good but through a lens of equity, justice, and mindfulness. She has an MBA from Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne in Switzerland and an International Director Certification from INSEAD in France. A keen industry practitioner, she has participated in global policy discussions in United Nations, the WEF as well as the G20 apart from speaking at some of the foremost Leadership Summits around the world. A sought-after speaker, she is also a guest lecturer at many top schools like EHL, St. Gallen University among many others globally.

## BASTIEN BLANC

### CO-FOUNDER, TROKADERO MANAGEMENT



The quintessential hotelier, Bastien is the Co-Founder of the international hospitality group TroKadero Management. The group operates in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and Australia, as a third-party operator as well as advisory to owners. Bastien's distinguished hospitality career spans 30 years over 4 continents, having trailblazed new markets, globally. His leadership and directorial positions have seen him previously working with some of the world's leading hotel operators including Interstate, FRHI, ACCOR, and IHG, with him driving luxury-led portfolios.

His expertise in operations, commercial performance as well as property and product development has been recognized through international awards. Bastien is passionate about the hospitality industry, its development, quality of offering, and advancing the talent of tomorrow. His leadership and performance in the hospitality industry have seen him recognized as one of the Top 100 Most Inspirational Leaders in the Global Hospitality and Travel Awards in 2023. Bastien also judges awards competitions and is invited to deliver keynotes at hospitality conferences around the world.

*“Bastien is passionate about the hospitality industry, its development, quality of offering, and advancing the talent of tomorrow.”*

## CALVIN TILOKEE

### CEO AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR, REVPAR MEDIA



During his 20-year hotel career, Calvin has amassed a diverse skill set in revenue management and hotel operations spanning multiple brands and markets, including Hilton, Marriott, IHG, Starwood, and independent properties. Experience at select service, full service, suburban, city, luxury, and waterpark hotels from New York City to Los Angeles has given Calvin a unique perspective and skill set.

These diverse experiences are the foundation of Calvin's Instagram page, Revparblems, where he creates humorous memes about working in the hospitality industry. An abundance of creativity married with the analytical skills developed as an experienced hotelier led Calvin to create Revpar Media LLC in 2020. Revpar Media focuses on helping our clients take a strategic approach to marketing, focusing on social media.

Calvin has been named one of the Top 15 Social Media Influencers in Hospitality and one of the Top 100 Most Influential People in Travel by the International Hospitality Institute.

## DAVID MILLILI

### CEO, LODGIQ



David is a hospitality technology leader with over 25 years of experience in the industry. He is the CEO of LodgiQ, a company that provides predictive and prescriptive analytics solutions for revenue management. He is also the Chairman of the Board of GAIN, a network of professional management partners, members, and associates in the technology sector.

In addition, he is the host and executive producer of The Modern Hotelier, a podcast that explores current trends, new technologies, and industry experts in hospitality. He also mentors aspiring entrepreneurs at the Hospitality Innovation Hub Incubator at New York University, where he previously taught hotel distribution courses. He has a proven track record of leading, innovating, and advising in various aspects of hotel operations, marketing, and e-commerce.

*"He has a proven track record of leading, innovating, and advising in various aspects of hotel operations, marketing, and e-commerce."*

## DR. ALTAF SOVANI

FOUNDER & CEO, ALZEN CONSULTING



Dr. Altaf Sovani Founder and CEO - Alzen Consulting, Inc. Altaf has over 25 years of experience in academic leadership and as a professor in post-secondary institutions as well as an entrepreneur and consultant in the private sector. He has teaching experiences at different prestigious institutions, such as Glion Institute of Higher Education (Switzerland), the University of Guelph (Canada), and Conestoga College (Canada). Additionally, Altaf worked in the international fora through partnerships with institutions in China, India, Costa Rica, Montenegro, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Altaf is the founder and CEO of Alzen Consulting Inc. specializing in the Hospitality, Tourism, and Event

industry. Formerly, he was the Academic Chair for the School of Hospitality & Tourism Management at Algonquin College, as well as the past Chair of Heads of Hospitality & Tourism Ontario (HOHTO). Altaf is an award-winning author of the book "Labor Crisis in Hospitality, Tourism and Event Industry: Finding innovative solutions for recruitment and retention of Millennials." Altaf has published numerous articles on hospitality and tourism in academic journals and continues to contribute as a guest lecturer, consultant, and external auditor for colleges and universities.

He is a frequent panelist and moderator for global hospitality and tourism conferences and seminars. Altaf was recently recognized as one of the "30 Most Influential Educators in Global Hospitality 2023" by the International Hospitality Institute. He is a recipient of the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his exemplary work in the field of education and has received an award from Meetings Professionals International (MPI) for National Meetings Influencer. He holds a DBA from California Southern University and an MBA from the University of Guelph. He continues to give his time and knowledge through volunteering and serving on boards and committees.

## DR. ETHAN CHENG

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY



Dr. Ethan (Yi-Sung) Cheng is an Assistant Professor of Hospitality and Tourism Management at the College of Business at Western Carolina University. He holds a Ph.D. in Food and Hospitality Systems from the University of Missouri-Columbia. His teaching interests include lodging management, hospitality human resource management, hospitality finance management, and hospitality sales and marketing. He brings his international industry experience and a global perspective to his courses. Dr. Cheng's research interests include human resource management, information technology, service marketing, and consumer behavior. His papers have been published in top-tier peer-reviewed journals, such as the International Journal of Hospitality Management, Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Management, Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing, and Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research.

## DR. AJAY ALURI

FOUNDING DIRECTOR, WVU HIT LAB & ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY



Dr. Aluri is an internationally recognized scholar, speaker, and thought leader in hospitality innovation and technology. He has been invited to speak at several international and national shows and conferences. Dr. Aluri is a recipient of numerous awards from international, national, and state-level organizations in academia and industry. Recently, International Hospitality Institute (IHI) awarded Dr. Aluri as one of the global top 25 most influential educators in hospitality. He established the state-of-the-art space Hospitality Innovation and Technology (HIT) Lab at the John Chambers College of Business and Economics, West Virginia University (WVU).

Dr. Aluri's academic and research expertise combines all areas of his education and research interests and focuses on hospitality information technology and management and information systems and how these areas impact international hospitality organizations, society, and education. His current focus is consumer behavior research regarding emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, data mining, the Internet of Things, robotics, and virtual reality. His research has been published in several top academic journals and industry outlets.

Dr. Aluri serves on the editorial and advisory boards of top and cutting-edge hospitality and tourism journals and organizations. Dr. Aluri is the Founding Director of the HIT Lab, a platform to bridge the gaps between academic and industry research. He incorporates real-life projects based on issues faced by hospitality businesses today so that students can get hands-on problem-solving experience. This is part of Dr. Aluri's teaching philosophy that students are best prepared for life after the classroom by getting real-life learning experiences with actual businesses along the way.

Dr. Aluri played a vital role in developing the Hospitality program at WVU. Dr. Aluri is an Associate Professor in the Hospitality program at the WVU John Chambers College of Business and Economics. The WVU's Office of the Provost selected Dr. Aluri as the recipient of the 2021-23 Innovation, Design, and Entrepreneurship Applied (IDEA) Faculty Fellowship, a multi-disciplinary initiative to bolster the culture of entrepreneurship and innovation. He currently serves on the International Hospitality Information Technology Association (IHITA) board as the Director of Industry Networking.

*“His current focus is consumer behavior research regarding emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, data mining, the Internet of Things, robotics, and virtual reality.”*

# DR. ERINN D. TUCKER-OLUWOLE, PHD (SHE/HER)

DEPARTMENT CHAIR AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR  
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND EASTERN SHORE, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM  
MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT  
CO-FOUNDER, DMV BLACK RESTAURANT WEEK



Erinn D. Tucker-Oluwole, PhD is the Department Chair of the Hospitality and Tourism Management Department at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) leading the program on three campuses within the University of Maryland System. She is the Co-Founder of DMV Black Restaurant Week and has worked for over 25 years consulting for small businesses in the service industry focusing on the hospitality industry, workforce development, destination management organizations, and Fortune 500 companies. She has been quoted in the Washington Post, Food & Wine Magazine, Washingtonian, DCist, Wall Street Journal, and CGTN America amongst other regional publications. She has been widely sought after by regional metropolitan media such as WTOP, Foodie and the Beast, WPRW, WEAFT Radio, Fox5, WUSA Channel 9, and others. Dr. Tucker-Oluwole has consulted for companies such as Amtrak, Social Tables, the Charlotte Hornets, and Charlotte Knights and has contributed event management experience to the 2016 Democratic National Convention.

Before UMES, she held faculty appointments at Georgetown University, Boston University, Temple University, and Johnson and Wales University, the latter being one of the top culinary arts programs in the US. Dr. Tucker-Oluwole has contributed articles

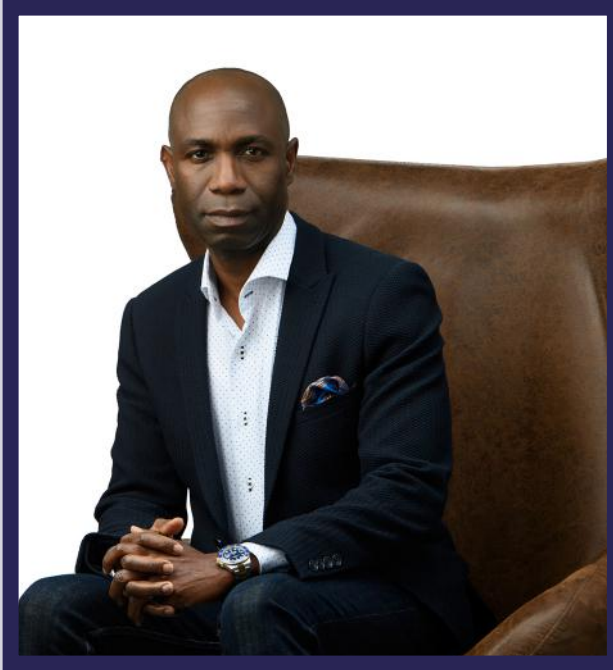
for Lodging, the official publication of the American Hotel and Lodging Association and Social Tables. She co-chaired the HR and Diversity Summit for Lodging magazine for three successful years, served on the inaugural local organizing committee for the historically black collegiate CIAA conference, advisor to the National Society for Minorities in Hospitality, served as chair and committee member for several hospitality associations including the International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Educators (ICHRIE) and Professional Conventions Management Association (PCMA) and National Coalition of Black Meeting Planners.

In 2023, she was honored with the Diversity in Business Award by the Washington Business Journal, named one of the 25 Most Influential Educators in Hospitality by the International Hospitality Institute and recipient of the Grace Award from Nolan Williams and The Kennedy Center Social Impact Initiative. Currently, she is on the Board of Directors for Restaurant Association of Metropolitan Washington (RAMW), Vice Chair & Mid-Atlantic co-chair for the Restaurant + Chef Awards committee, for the James Beard Foundation Awards and a former Clinton Foundation 20/30 Advisory Board member. She is a member of Les Dames d'Escoffier, Washington, DC Chapter, and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Her published work has appeared in tourism journals, textbooks, publications, and trade periodicals and she won the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Education Best Paper Award in 2016. Her upcoming book, The Black Travel Movement is under contract with Columbia University Press.

*for over 25 years consulting  
for small businesses in the  
service industry focusing  
on the hospitality industry,  
workforce development,  
destination management  
organizations, and Fortune  
500 companies.*

## DR. JEFFREY O

### PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INSTITUTE



Dr. Jeffrey O is an internationally renowned CEO, educator, leadership coach, and author. Described as one of the most famous people in the world of Hospitality, he has been featured on the cover of several business and hospitality magazines.

He is the current president of the International Hospitality Institute (IHI) where he oversees IHI's global operations. He is also CEO at St. Justine, the ultra-luxury travel brand.

Featuring offices in various countries, the International Hospitality Institute is the leading professional education, advocacy, and standards organization for the global hospitality industry.

Dr. Jeffrey O has published several books of fiction and non-fiction. Kirkus Reviews described Jeffrey's most recent thriller, *Dead or Alive*, as a "razor-sharp crime tale" and the book's protagonist as "a superlative hero."

Dr. Jeffrey O has held leadership positions such as CEO, COO, and Divisional Vice President, and has managed annual portfolio revenues exceeding \$250 million. He has served as a Board Member on Marriott International's Rooms Advisory Board and serves on several boards.

In February 2023, he was elected as Chairman of the Hoteliers' Guild Academy of Hospitality Arts, an invitation-only society of the world's leading hoteliers based in Lugano, Switzerland. In 2021, he received the Industry Choice Award from Otoló, a London-based hospitality organization, in recognition of his mentoring work for the global hospitality industry. In 2022, he received the Pan African American Leadership Award from the African Women's Leadership Forum (AWLO). In 2023, he was honored as the Hospitality Icon of the Year by the Pyne Awards. In October 2023, he was recognized as one of the Top 10 Most Influential People in the Global Hospitality Industry by Business Anecdote Magazine.

He is the founder of the International Hospitality Hall of Fame®. Dr. Jeffrey O earned his Ph.D. in Leadership Studies from Johnson University. A lifelong learner, he was admitted into a master's program for Adult Education and Leadership at Columbia University, New York, in 2023.

For more information, visit Dr. Jeffrey O at [www.JeffreyO.com](http://www.JeffreyO.com) or his Wikipedia page.

*"Dr. Jeffrey O earned his Ph.D. in Leadership Studies from Johnson University. A lifelong learner, he was admitted into a master's program for Adult Education and Leadership at Columbia University, New York, in 2023."*

## DR. PETER RICCI

DIRECTOR OF THE HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM  
FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY (FAU).



Dr. Peter Ricci is the Director of the Hospitality and Tourism Management program at Florida Atlantic University (FAU). The Program is a Top 30 nationally. He has published more than industry and academic articles. He also maintains hospitality industry certifications across the various areas of marketing, sales, analytics, and hotel management.

Peter is a distinguished alumnus of the University of Florida where he pursued both bachelor's and master's degrees. He later completed his doctorate at the University of Central Florida in Orlando.

His proudest accomplishment was the creation in his honor of the Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International's Dr. Peter Ricci scholarship. This fund provides annual financial awards to top-performing students studying hospitality sales, marketing, and revenue optimization across South Florida's colleges and universities.

## DR. SUSAN BAGNERA

DIRECTOR, INDIAN RIVER STATE COLLEGE (IRSC) HOSPITALITY INSTITUTE



Director of the Indian River State College (IRSC) Hospitality Institute, Suzanne Markham Bagnera, Ph.D., brings more than 19 years of higher education experience and more than 25 years of hands-on industry experience in the hospitality sphere to her leadership role at the institute. She is presently developing the curriculum for the Anthony Melchiorri Institute of Hospitality. The institute offers global online certification courses to support the educational training advancement of individuals in the industry.

Suzanne oversees curriculum development and partnership relationships to create dynamic hospitality education for the department working in conjunction with the Culinary Arts Institute of the Treasure Coast. She also serves as a faculty member teaching classes in the hospitality program.

During the week, Suzanne also serves as the Executive Producer for the #1 podcast in the hospitality space, No Vacancy Live, with hosts Glenn Haussman and Anthony Melchiorri. During the podcast, guests from the industry engage in what is happening in the hospitality industry. The podcast is rated among the top half of a percent of all podcasts globally. In 2023, the podcast received the Industry Recognition Award from ICHRIE.

In 2020, Suzanne founded the Hospitality Leadership Academy, where she serves as Managing Partner. Together with her business partners, HLA seeks to offer customized training and management services for businesses seeking to improve their customer service experience, dazzle customers, and develop talented employees.

She is the co-author of the textbook Human Resource Management in Hospitality Cases, published by Routledge. Suzanne recently authored seven chapters in the new edition of the Hospitality

& Tourism Management Program textbook by the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institute. Additionally, she has co-written the Organizing Staff chapter in the Operations Management in the Hospitality Industry textbook.

Suzanne started in the hospitality industry working at Louie's Shore Restaurant in New York, where on-scene filming for Meet the Parents occurred. She has held the position of General Manager at Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, Staybridge Suites, and Holiday Inn Express. Suzanne has worked in each of the hotel department operations positions (e.g. Guest Services, Food & Beverage, Restaurant, Revenue Management).

Recently, Suzanne served as Clinical Assistant Professor and Chair of Undergraduate Programs in the School of Hospitality Administration at Boston University. She has been an adjunct instructor for the Master's program in Hospitality Management at Johnson & Wales University, an adjunct professor at Fisher College, an Assistant Professor at Endicott College in the School of Hospitality Management, the Program Director and Assistant Professor in the Hospitality Management program at Mount Ida College, an Instructor at Bunker Hill Community College in the Hotel & Restaurant Management Department, and an instructor for the Massachusetts Lodging Association (MLA). In 2016 Suzanne was awarded the Lamp of Knowledge for being an Outstanding U.S. Educator by the American Hotel and Lodging Educational Institute (AHLEI).

Presently, she is a board member of the Florida Restaurant Lodging Association Treasure Coast Chapter. She is a member of the International Council of Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional

Education (I-CHRIE), has served as President of the North East North American (NENA) Federation and the co-chair of the Federation Sub-Committee for the 75th Anniversary Task Force. Additionally, Suzanne serves on the American Hotel & Lodging Educational Institutes' Education and Certification Advisory Council (ECAC). Suzanne serves as a peer reviewer for the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Insights, the International Journal of Gaming Hospitality and Tourism, and multiple special interest groups for the I-CHRIE annual conference. For more than nine years, Suzanne served as the Event Manager for the Restaurant Service aspect of the State of Massachusetts SkillsUSA competition.

Suzanne earned her doctorate from Iowa State University in Hospitality Management. Her dissertation topic examined the impact that hotel reviews on TripAdvisor have on revenue in the Boston market of hotels. She earned her M.B.A. in Management and B.S./A.S. in Hotel/Restaurant Management from Johnson & Wales University—graduating Summa Cum Laude with membership into the Eta Sigma Delta honor society. She additionally holds numerous certifications in hospitality training which include Certified Hotel Administrator (C.H.A.) and ServSafe. Her research interests include customer service, training, teamwork, and lodging operation management.

In 2022, Suzanne was recognized as one of the 100 Most Powerful People in USA Hospitality, and in 2021 as the 25 Most Influential Educators in Hospitality by the International Hospitality Institute. In 2023, the International Hospitality Institute recognized Suzanne as one of the Top 50 Global Social Media Influencers in Hospitality and 30 Most Influential Educators.

## EMILY KANDERS GOLDFISCHER

### FOUNDER, HERTELIER



A curious journalist passionate about the hotel industry, Emily Kanders Goldfisher founded hertelier in March of 2021. An online media platform that enlightens and inspires women in hospitality to pursue, navigate, and nurture their careers at every stage, hertelier has taken off, creating a dynamic and engaged community of professionals.

Emily curates hertelier's content through the lens of supporting women in their hotel industry careers—sharing valuable lessons from accomplished pros and rising stars, covering business skills, work/life balance, industry news, and networking opportunities presented in a fresh voice, with bold graphics and social media integration. Her free Sunday newsletter, Round-Up, a summary of important news from the week, has quickly grown into 'essen-

tial reading' for industry insiders with an open rate of over 50%.

A self-confessed "hotel nerd," and a graduate of the Cornell University Nolan School of Hotel Administration with a master's from the London School of Economics. Emily began marketing and promoting hotels, restaurants, and destinations on

the agency side, before joining Loews Hotels as the Vice President of Public Relations, managing the brand's corporate comms and hotel PR for over a decade. Originally from New Jersey, Emily has been living in London with her family since 2010, where they have made it a mission to travel Europe and the UK.

## AMAKA AMATOKWU-NDEKWU

### HOSPITALITY EXPERT, CONSULTANT, AND ANALYST



Over fourteen years as a hospitality expert, consultant, and analyst in Africa and the United States, with a track record of tenacity, strong drive, passion, and leadership. She is an inspirational industry leader with a demonstrated track record of being a results-oriented leader, visionary, and change agent. She has been instrumental in the development of numerous programs aimed at boosting growth and development in Africa's hospitality and tourism industries. Her experience in the hospitality and tourism industries includes hotel operations, advocacy, negotiations and sales, strategic planning, human resource development, training, women empowerment initiatives, and events.

She holds an AMP certificate in business management and marketing from Lagos Business School, a postgraduate certificate in business management from the European School of Economics in London,

United Kingdom, a certification in hotel distribution fundamentals from ESSEC Business School, and a bachelor's degree in accounting from Madonna University in Okija, Nigeria. She is a Castell Project Leadership Program alumna from the class of 2019.

She has experience working at and managing hotels for both local and international brands. She is the Chairperson and Co-Founder of the African Association of Women in Tourism and Hospitality (AAWTH), as well as the Chairperson, Founder, and former President of The Women in Hospitality Nigeria (WIHN). These organizations were founded to serve as a voice of support for all females working in the hospitality and tourism industries, as well as to pioneer changes in gender equality and governance in the hospitality and tourism sectors. She is a member of various hospitality and tourism organizations' boards of directors. She established the prestigious Pyne Awards, which recognize pioneers in African hospitality and tourism.

She is a member of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group's operational team's hospitality and tourism sector thematic group. She led the NESG-THITG sub-committee on human capital development and training policies. Among her other accomplishments, she is a mentor with the Lagos Business School and the Cherie Blair Foundation for Women in Business in the United Kingdom, a partner with Interswitch Group on their Merchant Payment Services for hospitality and lifestyle organizations, a course facilitator with the International Security Organization in Switzerland, a member of the Top 100 Founding Volunteer Mentors of the Manatee Mentors Program/App in Basel, Switzerland, a course facilitator with the International Security as well as a member of the African Tourism Board.

She has contributed to Africa's hospitality and tourism industries' reforms, restructuring, expansion, and social development. Her impact has earned her global recognition, including Top 30 Hospitality Leaders in Nigeria 2018, an award from the Global Leadership Institute; Tourism Hero 2021 from the World Tourism Network; Winner-Women in Leadership Award & 2nd Runner-Up-Outstanding Entrepreneurship

Award by the African Tourism Leadership Forum in 2021, and most recently Global Top 25 Most Inspirational Executives in Travel & Hospitality 2021

and Global Top 20 Hospitality Executives to Watch in 2022 by the International Hospitality Institute, USA, and Y Naija Top 100 Women in Nigeria 2022.

## FILIP BOYEN

LUXURY HOSPITALITY ADVISOR, SENIOR ADVISOR CORINTHIA HOTELS,  
GLOBAL AMBASSADOR FORBES TRAVEL GUIDE,  
ADVISOR ORIENT EXPRESS LA DOLCE VITA TRAINS ITALY



A luxury hospitality career spanning more than four decades has led Filip Boyen everywhere from Turkey, South Africa, and Moscow to Bora Bora and Peru.

Before setting up his own Luxury Hospitality Consultancy firm Boyen served as CEO of Forbes Travel Guide. Previously, he served as CEO of Small Luxury Hotels of the World, where he oversaw a portfolio of more than 520 exceptional independent hotels in 80 countries.

Prior to that post, the Belgium native spent 18 years with Orient-Express, the famed precursor to the Belmond brand. First joining the hospitality company as general manager of Bora Bora Lagoon Resort in Tahiti, he rose through the ranks to become executive vice president and chief operating officer of Orient-Express. In between, his various roles included Group Vice President Operations; Regional Vice President, Africa, Australia & Latin America; and Managing Director of hotels and trains in Peru.

Boyen began his hospitality career as a commis chef and stayed in the food and beverage side of the business for 10 years, working in Michelin-starred restaurants in Belgium and France. He even did a stint under French master chef Joël Robuchon.

His extensive background in food and beverage, experience in managing complex operations—including trains and ships—and luxury hospitality expertise all harmoniously combine in his capacity as a Luxury Hospitality Advisor.

"Quality has always been a passion of mine. I support and celebrate everyone who has a passion for extraordinary service."

*His extensive background in food and beverage, experience in managing complex operations — including trains and ships—and luxury hospitality expertise all harmoniously combine in his capacity as a Luxury Hospitality Advisor.*

## MIRAJ PATEL

CEO, WAYSIDE INVESTMENT COMPANY



Miraj S. Patel, MBA, CHO, CHIA, serves as the Vice Chairman of AAHOA, the world's largest hotel owners association. He served as a committee member for several years and joined AAHOA's board of directors in 2019 after being elected as the Young Professional Director Western Division.

Miraj is a second-generation hotelier who began his career in hospitality from a young age growing up in his family's first 30-room independent property. Today, Miraj is President of Wayside Investment Group, a Texas-based company that specializes in making opportunistic investments in the lodging and hospitality real estate sector. He has spoken at several prestigious and high-profile business, educational, social, and legislative conferences; while being recognized in various trade magazines.

Over the years, Miraj has exemplified a strong track record of leadership in the industry. Aside from his devotion to the hospitality industry, he is a firm believer in giving back to the community. He serves on various industry associations and charitable organizations and continues to seek opportunities to make a positive difference.

Miraj earned his Master's in Business Administration, and his Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel and Lodging Management from Johnson and Wales University in Miami, Florida.

## FRANCES KIRADJIAN

FOUNDER AND CEO, BOUTIQUE LIFESTYLE LEADERS ASSOCIATION (BLLA)  
CO-FOUNDER, STAY BOUTIQUE™



With many years in hospitality and travel under her belt, Frances Kiradjian is a seasoned professional whose passion and knowledge show through the organizations that she has built over the past 30+ years. In 2009, Frances created the Boutique & Lifestyle Lodging Association (now the Boutique Lifestyle Leaders Association (BLLA) to give a voice to independent, upscale hotel properties, who at the time had no representation in the industry. Frances took notice and ensured that these boutique hotels had the means to compete on a level playing field with major hotel companies. Frances runs the 5 divisions alongside her daughter, Ariela Kiradjian.

Today, BLLA serves hundreds of worldwide members including independent boutique hotels, small brands, and the vendor suppliers that sustain them. What started as a platform for boutique hotels has recently turned into a haven for all boutique businesses, including restaurants, bars, nightlife, wellness, retail, and more, making our community inclusive on a grand scale globally. Through a very close-knit community of members, extremely well-thought-out conferences and global events, and promotion of the leaders and spaces through very

high-end printed and digital magazines and exclusive sites, BLLA, and its divisions - Stay Boutique™, Boutique Money Group, and BLLA Events, our community is together - creating collaborative opportunities for all the members as they share the same boutique-loving customer.

Additionally, Frances founded the Travel Industry Executive Women's Network (TIEWN) in 2008 to unite women in the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries, 15 years before most women's groups you see today. The 13,000 members unite annually for The Women in Travel & Hospitality Conference in Los Angeles to discuss the progress of DEI in our industry and create pathways of mentorship and discussions of legacies that have been created along the way. The network continues to improve the progress of women into the C-suites of today's travel-related companies. In addition, boutiques share this philosophy: "Boutique is not a thing, it's not a store, it's not a room—it's an experience. It's something that incorporates all five senses in our current culture."

Although Kiradjian has extensive experience in the travel industry, her focus has primarily been held in the hospitality and lifestyle sectors. She created and developed the first travel agent-centric hotel booking portal, which combined multiple hotel inventories and allowed for mark-ups of a net rate. This has

continued to serve as an important business model for travel-related technology companies today. Kiradjian began her career in the travel industry as a national accounts manager at Carlson Wagonlit Travel, where she managed top global accounts including Baxter Healthcare, Toyota, and Disney.

Kiradjian is a graduate of the University of Southern California, (USC) from the highly respected Marshall School of Business. Fran heads up the BLLA Board of Advisors and the StayBoutique Board of Advisors as well as participating as a Board of Directors member of St. Justine's Luxury Hotels (along with other well-known hospitality industry icons).

#### About BLLA

The official organization for the world's boutique lifestyle leaders promoting connection, education, and advocacy. As a pioneer in forecasting the boutique movement, the BLLA's network has grown beyond its hotel foundation to welcome more passionate entrepreneurs, businesses, and purveyors who amplify the boutique lifestyle. The corporate manifesto. BLLA is a catalyst for trends and the future of the boutique lifestyle. [BLLA.org](http://BLLA.org) / [TIEWN.com](http://TIEWN.com) / [BLLAEVENTS.com](http://BLLAEVENTS.com) / [BoutiqueMoneyGroup.com](http://BoutiqueMoneyGroup.com) / [Stay-Boutique.com](http://Stay-Boutique.com).

## GILDA PEREZ ALVARADO

### CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, ACCOR



Gilda Perez-Alvarado is the Chief Strategy Officer at Accor. Prior to her current role, she served as Global CEO, JLL Hotels & Hospitality, where she was responsible for investment sales, debt and equity placement, strategic advisory, and asset management across all global regions. Additionally, Gilda

led JLL's group's Global Hotel Desk, a specialized team of cross-border investment sales professionals based in the Middle East, Asia Pacific, the Americas, and Europe.

She also serves on the Board of Directors of Sonder, the Board of Trustees of Cornell University, is an active member of IREFAC, and is a member of Cornell School of Hotel Administration Dean's Advisory Board. Gilda is also a two-time recipient of the Jack A. Shaffer Financial Advisor of the Year at the Americas Lodging Investment Summit. She remains the only woman to date to receive this award.

*"Gilda is also a two-time recipient of the Jack A. Shaffer Financial Advisor of the Year at the Americas Lodging Investment Summit."*

## GLENN HAUSSMAN

### HOST, NO VACANCY PODCAST



Glenn Haussman is the hospitality industry's most well-known advocate, commentator, educator, and consultant. In both 2022 and 2023, he was recognized by the International Hospitality Institute as the #1 Global Social Media Influencer in Hospitality, and his show, No Vacancy Live, was also named the #1 podcast in hospitality. Additionally, in May 2022 he received the Leadership Excellence Award from SKAL USA for his tireless work bringing the hotel industry together during the Covid crisis, while the

podcast was given a Davey Award.

Glenn publishes the novacancynews.com industry news site; is a professional keynote speaker, event host, and moderator; consultant/ strategist, and speaker/media trainer.

Additionally, he hosts No Vacancy News Today, a news and analysis program focused on hospitality headlines; and Friday Night Audit, a comedy-focused happy hour show.

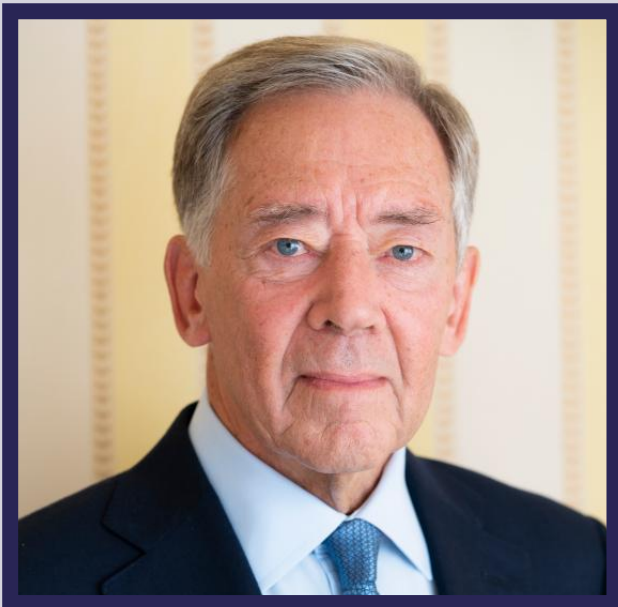
The No Vacancy podcast hosted by Glenn Haussman and Anthony Melchiorri attracts the biggest names in hospitality, including major public company CEOs and industry influencers.

Glenn has been quoted in leading publications such as the New York Times, USA Today, Washington Post, Forbes, MSNBC.com, CNN.com, and Chicago Tribune. He's also been in the classroom, previously serving for nearly 10 years as an adjunct professor at New York University, teaching classes in Public Relations and advertising, and Consumer Behavior.

Find Glenn at [Glenn@novacancynews.com](mailto:Glenn@novacancynews.com) and @TravelingGlenn on social.

## HARRY MURRAY, MBE.MI.FIH

### PRESIDENT, HOSPA



Harry Murray is the current president of the Hospitality Professionals Association, a role he has held since 2018. He has managed 5-star luxury hotels during a career spanning five decades.

He served as Director/Advisor at the Edge Hotel School University of Essex from 2009 to 2019.

He has served in several capacities including Honorary Ambassador of the Hoteliers Guild, Ambassador and Patron of Hospitality Action, Governor of the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts, and Life Patron of Springboard.

He has won several awards including the following:  
1982 Master Innholder Award -Chairman 1986  
1982 Freeman City of London.  
1982 Appointed Fellow Institute of Hospitality/  
Member since 1974  
1986 Hotelier of the Year  
2006 Appointed MBE for 'Services to the Hospitality Industry.'

2008 Catey -Lifetime Achievement Award  
2013 AA -Lifetime Achievement Award  
2013 Hon MBA University West London  
2017 Outstanding Contribution to Tourism Award  
2019 Honorary Degree of Doctor University of Essex

## JONATHON S. ZINK

COO, THE BHN GROUP



Business development, strategy, operations, growth, and content all fall under Jonathon's leadership. Jonathon has been recognized by the International Hospitality Institute as top 100 most inspirational people in global hospitality and travel, and Top 25 social media influencers in hospitality.

Previously, Jonathon was manager, the strategic business unit for The Soneva Group based in both the Maldives and Thailand. Jonathon worked in cross-functional teams to develop and implement group-wide initiatives, analyzed and recommended solutions for new projects/business opportunities, and reported directly to the chairman & CEO. The Soneva Group is a successful luxury collection of world-class resorts that sets the benchmark for responsible tourism through its SLOW LIFE philosophy.

Jonathon Zink is the Chief Operating Officer of The BHN Group, which is a global division of Northstar Travel Group. The BHN Group is the worldwide leader in owning and producing hotel and tourism investment conferences – successfully completed 170 conferences in 22 countries bringing 120,000 delegates together to network, conduct business, and learn about the latest trends. The BHN Group also publishes Hotel Investment Today, a digital media outlet focused on the ROI of hotel investment.

Jonathon holds an MBA from the International University of Japan (IUJ) in 2013 and a BA from The School of Hospitality Business at Michigan State University (MSU) in 2004. Jonathon is an active IUJ alumnus, serves on the Real Estate Investment Management Advisory Council at MSU, and is a Mentor in the Experiential Networking course at Cornell University's Nolan School of Hotel Administration.

## KARIM ABDELHAMID

VICE PRESIDENT-HOTEL OPERATIONS, THE FIRST GROUP



In his current role, he is responsible for driving operational success across the hotel portfolio, executing profitability strategies, while developing talent for the group's properties.

With a strong track record of building and sustaining cohesive, top-performing teams, Karim has a successful background in multi-property operations, as well as managing prestigious F&B venues, including Michelin-star restaurants and convention centers.

Over the years, Karim has worked at 5-star luxury and lifestyle hotels around the world including The Plaza Hotel – A Fairmont Property in New York, The Ritz Carlton Central Park New York, Sofitel Legend Old Cataract Egypt, Sofitel Philadelphia, Qatar Foundation, The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort and Spa, The Knickerbocker Hotel New York, which was the first independent luxury property in Times Square, The InterContinental Hotels Dubai Festival City and InterContinental Jubail Resort.

With over 25 years of experience in hospitality, and managing renowned luxury and lifestyle properties worldwide, Karim is the Vice President of Hotel Operations at The First Group based in Dubai.

In addition, he has developed nine prestigious ultra-luxury hotels including Mandarin Oriental, Park Hyatt, Capella, and Zula Wellness Resort by Chiva-Som.

Karim is a guest satisfaction enthusiast who demonstrates the ability to increase guest satisfaction

scores year over year while ensuring strong positioning for his properties. He graduated from St. John's University in New York City with a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Hospitality Management as well as Cornell University's Senior Leadership Program.

## LAN ELLIOTT

**CO-FOUNDER & PRINCIPAL, ACACIA HOSPITALITY LLC**



Lan Elliott has been in the hospitality industry for over 25+ years as a hotel real estate & transactions executive. Most recently, Lan rejoined Acacia Hospitality LLC, a hotel investment entity she

co-founded, which owns interests in four urban convention hotels. Prior to Acacia, Lan spent over 10 years at Host Hotels & Resorts, where she closed on transactions totaling over \$7 billion. She also held previous roles at IHG, W Hotels, and KPMG.

Lan serves as Co-Chair of the non-profit Castell@ College, an AHLA Foundation Project, for which she is a recipient of the 2022 Industry Recognition Award from the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education. She also serves as a Board Member, Principal, and Interview Host of DEI Advisors, a non-profit dedicated to empowering personal success in the hospitality industry. DEI Advisors' podcast was recognized by the International Hospitality Institute ("IHI") as one of the Top Podcasts for Hospitality for 2023. Lan is currently a member of the Urban Land Institute's Hotel Development Council, serves on the Executive Advisory Board of the University of Denver's Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality Management, and was named one of IHI's 100 Most Inspirational Leaders in Hospitality and Travel for 2023.

## LEORA HALPERN LANZ, ISHC

**ASSISTANT DEAN OF ACADEMICS, FACULTY CHAIR OF THE GRADUATE PROGRAMS, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF THE PRACTICE  
BOSTON UNIVERSITY'S SCHOOL OF HOSPITALITY ADMINISTRATION**



Leora Halpern Lanz, ISHC is the Assistant Dean of Academics, Faculty Chair of the Graduate Programs, and Associate Professor of the Practice at Boston University's School of Hospitality Administration (BU SHA). She teaches the school's senior-level Experiential Marketing course and the graduate Digital Marketing Strategies for Hospitality class. She serves on the University's Faculty Affairs Council, as Faculty Advisor for the University Hillel, and Faculty Advisor for the Alpha Kappa Psi business fraternity.

Prior to joining SHA in 2015, Leora served as principal of LHL Communications, assisting hotels, restaurants, tourist attractions, and destinations with branding and marketing strategies and solu-

tions, including media relations, digital and social media advisory, and online reputation management, including the development of internal and external position statements; content creation and story-telling for audience engagement and connections; media training, and “branding” and “solutions” sales training. Her clients included hospitality management and ownership companies, consulting firms and advisory services, regional investment conferences around the globe, and a lodging brand owners association.

For 15 years, Leora served as Global Director of Marketing and communications for hospitality consulting giant HVS. She was responsible for overseeing the internal and external marketing communications for the organization’s offices, services, conferences, articles, and research. She directed the firm’s global business teams for marketing and communications, graphic standards, internal communications, social media, conference branding, and the Market Connections annual event. She also managed and edited the firm’s weekly newsletter, the Global Hospitality Report, and was the company’s primary media contact.

Simultaneously, Leora directed HVS’s Sales & Marketing division, working directly with hotel owners, properties and companies, hospitality-related services, and other entertainment and recreational venues. Leora and her team of experienced marketing communications specialists provided strategic planning, innovative sales training, and action planning, social media marketing and publicity, and big-picture branding consultancy.

Prior to joining HVS, she worked for nearly ten years as Director of Public Relations and advertising for

the ITT Sheraton Hotels of New York and for five years as Director of Public Relations for the Greater Boston Convention & Visitors Bureau (now Meet Boston).

A member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants (ISHC) and the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMAI), Leora is a member of the Hotelier’s Guild Academy of Hospitality Arts and is a member of the Americas Advisory Board for HSMAI. She was named one of the Top 100 Powerful Leaders of Hospitality in the US in 2022 by the International Hospitality Institute (IHI). The IHI also named her one of the Top 25 Influential Hospitality Educators for 2021 and Top 30 in 2022 and appointed her as one of its five Educational Advisory Board Members. In February 2017, HSMAI’s national leadership awarded Leora as one of the Top 25 Extraordinary Minds of Hospitality Sales & Marketing. She was also honored as Professor of the Year for 2016-2017 by the students at Boston University’s School of Hospitality Administration.

In November 2019, she was named one of the “18 Women Paving the Way in Hospitality” by Lodging magazine; in early 2020 she was nominated as a Massachusetts Lodging Association Business Partner of the Year; and in 2010 Hospitality Marketing Executive of the Year by the Big Apple (Greater New York) chapter of HSMAI.

Leora earned a bachelor’s degree from Cornell University and a master’s from Boston University, writing her master’s thesis on hotel crisis communications. Over the years, she has written for dozens of industry publications including BU SHA’s Boston Hospitality Review.

## LETICIA PROCTOR

**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT - SALES, MARKETING, AND REVENUE MANAGEMENT  
DONOHUE HOSPITALITY SERVICES**



Leticia Proctor is Executive Vice President of Sales, Marketing, and Revenue Management at Donohue Hospitality Services. Leticia provides leadership and strategy for direct sales, catering, revenue management, e-distribution, and marketing associates and functions for DHS and its hotel portfolio.

Leticia has 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry, working with major hotel companies to improve sales, marketing, catering, revenue management, digital strategies, and hotel operations. She has held sales and marketing positions with well-known hotel companies including Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, Hersha Hospitality Management, Crestline Hotels & Resorts, Remington Hotels, Interstate Hotels & Resorts, Loews Hotels and

Hospitality Partners. Directly prior to joining Donohoe, Leticia was Senior Vice President of sales, Revenue Management, and Digital Strategies at PM Hotel Group, responsible for the development and implementation of all sales, revenue management, and digital strategy efforts for the company at the national, regional, and property levels.

Recently, Leticia was recognized as one of the Top 25 Most Influential Women in Hospitality, Top 25 Most Inspirational Executives in Travel/Hospitality,

and Top 50 Most Influential Leaders in Hospitality by the International Hospitality Institute. She also received HSMIA's Top 25 Most Extraordinary Minds award, Washington Business Journal's Top 25 Minority Business Leader award, and was selected as Georgetown University's Hoya Professional 30. Leticia obtained her Bachelor of Science in Legal Studies with a minor in Business Law and Public Policy from the University of Maryland. Leticia also received her Master of Professional Studies in Hospitality Management at Georgetown University.

## MARY GOSTELOW

### HOST, GIRLAHEAD PODCAST



Mary Gostelow links all stakeholders in global hospitality, from owners through to operators and customers. She communicates B2B (including her podcast reach of nearly 65,000 in 155 countries) and B2C (including a confirmed reach of 50,000 HNWI's every week).

*"...her podcast reach of nearly 65,000 in 155 countries) and B2C (including a confirmed reach of 50,000 HNWI's every week)."*

## RACHEL HUMPHREY

BOARD MEMBER, SPEAKER, HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY EXECUTIVE, AND COUNSEL



Rachel is the Founder of the Women in Hospitality Leadership Alliance and is a Board Member, Principal, and Interview Host for DEI Advisors. Before retiring in August 2021, Rachel served as the EVP & COO of AAHOA, the nation's largest and most influential hotel owners association, and served as a member of its Executive Leadership Team and in 2019 its Interim President & CEO. Rachel joined AAHOA in 2015 after more than 20 years as a trial lawyer.

Rachel has been recognized as one of the most "Influential Women in Hospitality," one of the "Top 50 Women in Travel," one of the "100 Most Powerful People in USA Hospitality," and one of the "100 Most Inspirational People in Hospitality" and has received numerous awards and recognitions

for her leadership and service to the hospitality industry. She is dedicated to advancing women in leadership in the hospitality industry. In addition to the Alliance and DEI Advisors, Rachel currently serves on the boards of Women in Travel Thrive

and the Kennesaw State University Coles College of Business. She is also a frequent speaker at industry conferences and serves on numerous advisory boards within the hospitality industry.

## ROBERT RICHARDSON, FIH MI

### CEO, INSTITUTE OF HOSPITALITY



Robert Richardson FIH MI is the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute of Hospitality (IoH), the award-winning, global, professional body of almost 15,000 hospitality professionals worldwide and a registered charity. IoH is dedicated to driving the recognition of the hospitality profession and uplifting its membership through lifelong learning, mentorship, and network-building.

A long-time member of IoH, Richardson built his career in the hospitality industry. Working his way up through the ranks from hotel floor staff to hotel General Manager, and now as CEO of IoH, he has a deep belief in making the hospitality industry open, inclusive, and accessible to all who seek to join it. In 2021, Robert led the Institute to win the Chartered Governance Institute UK&I "Diversity & Inclusion Strategy of the Year" award in recognition of these efforts.

Prior to joining IoH, Richardson served in senior management positions at major hotel chains including Hilton Worldwide, IHG, and Ramada Jarvis, before applying those industry best practices to a few of England's best independent hotels. For the last 12 years, Richardson served as General Manager across two independent, luxury properties, including a luxury boutique hotel and golf re-

sort in the Kentish countryside, and a grade 2 listed coastal heritage property.

A true people champion, Richardson believes that for organizations to succeed and thrive, people must feel they belong regardless of background or position. To this end, he regularly speaks on his efforts in the international and U.K. conference circuit and trade press, as well as contributing frequently to radio and podcast conversations in both his home country of the U.K. and abroad.

Richardson was recognized by Hotel Designs on their 2020 Brit List as "one of the top 25 hoteliers operating in Great Britain" and on Boutique Hotelier's "2022 Power List" as an "Industry Titan", "one of the top 50 inspirational and influential hospitality professionals operating in the world today". In 2022 Richardson was made an "Honorary Master Innholder" by the Worshipful Company of Innholders and was recognized in the USA-produced "Global Hospitality" Magazine as "one of the 100 Most Powerful People in Europe's Travel and Hospitality Industry" in both 2022 and 2023.

Additional recognition includes Southern Enterprise Awards' Boutique Hospitality Manager for two years running, the Shaw Trust Employer of the Year Award, for his work developing hospitality employment strategies for people with disabilities, Boutique Hotelier's "2020 Power List" as a "Young Trailblazer", and the Institute of Hospitality Judges' Special Achievement Award.

Richardson is also a trustee for the registered charity "Room to Reward", a unique volunteer-recognition charity created to say 'thank you' to the inspirational volunteers who give up their time to make a difference to those who need it most.

*"...he has a deep belief in making the hospitality industry open, inclusive, and accessible to all who seek to join it."*

## RUPESH “RUP” PATEL

### HOTEL INVESTOR & ADVOCATE



Rupesh “Rup” Patel is the host of Hospitality Live with Rupesh. He is an active hotel investor and a strong voice for the hospitality industry.

*“...Rupesh “Rup” Patel is the host of Hospitality Live with Rupesh.”*

## WILLIAM “CHIP” ROGERS

### PRESIDENT & CEO, AHLA



William “Chip” Rogers is the President and CEO of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AHLA). Prior to joining AHLA, he was President and CEO of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA).

Rogers earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology and an MBA from Georgia State University’s J. Mack Robinson College of Business.

*“Rogers earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the Georgia Institute of Technology and an MBA from Georgia State University’s J. Mack Robinson College of Business.”*



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# HOSPITALITY VOICES

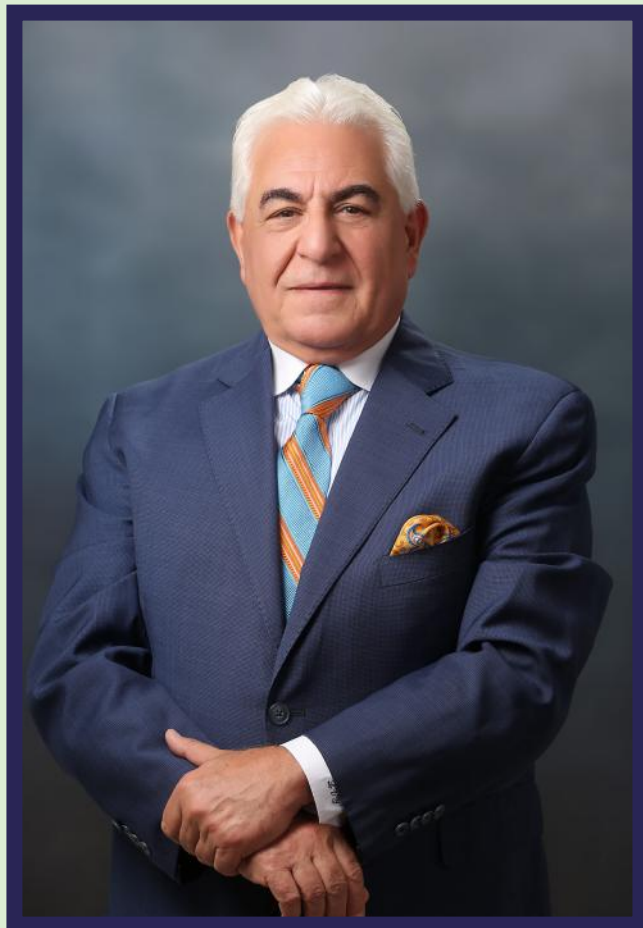
## FROM AROUND THE WORLD

The hospitality industry is vibrant because it embraces people from diverse backgrounds. In the post-COVID-19 era, our ability to connect with each other and learn from each other will only make our industry stronger. In this issue, the editorial team at the Global Hospitality Magazine connected with two hospitality professionals working in various sectors of the industry. Here are their voices.



# INTERVIEW WITH VATCHÉ YERGATIAN

## HOTEL ADVISOR AND CONSULTANT, ARMENIA



### **How long have you been in the hospitality industry?**

I started my career in 1974 as a catering maître d'hôtel and here I am today as an advisor and consultant in the Tourism, Hotel, and Hospitality management sector. I have traveled the world for various career assignments. I have been to six continents. Antarctica is the only one left to explore.

### **What attracted you to the hospitality industry?**

The opportunity to demonstrate my creativity and my passion for serving others and interacting with diverse people and cultures.

### **How did you end up in your current position?**

After retirement, I took many consultancy assignments. I have served in an advisory role for the Ministry of Economy's Tourism Committee of Armenia since September 2024.

### **What motivates you?**

Developing and guiding all those that I work with. Using innovation and creativity in my daily work.

### **Who is your mentor or role model in the hospitality industry?**

I consider my team to be my mentor. They give me hope. I refer to Oprah Winfrey's quote "A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself."

I seek their input. We make decisions collectively, and when we succeed, I give them credit. If we fail, I take full responsibility.

### **What do you consider to be your career milestone?**

Each step I take is a milestone. For me a milestone is where you pause for a while and then take another journey. Hospitality career is a never-ending journey.

### **In what area(s) does the hospitality industry need to improve?**

Human resources, understanding what hospitality is about.

### **What are the key attributes that a hospitality leader should have?**

Hospitality Mindset. They should be convinced and act in that mindset and take the approach that this is not just a job, it's my lifestyle.

### **What is your advice to young people who are considering a hospitality career?**

You are getting into an industry where things change drastically. You might lose interest and decide to change careers. But if you are passionate and persevere, you will find success.

### **What is the one thing that you wish you had done differently in your career in hospitality?**

I wish I had known the difference between "achievement" and "enjoyment." I did not pay attention to the importance of work-life balance. When you are reaping career success year after year, you think you are in control, when in reality you are not. Your family members are paying the price. When I woke up, I managed to turn things around. It wasn't too late.

# INTERVIEW WITH RISHI CHEULKAR

## CONCIERGE AT PARK HYATT TORONTO



### **What motivates you?**

I enjoy seeing the sheer delight on my guests' faces when add a touch of magic to their stay.

### **What do you like the most about the hospitality industry?**

Beyond the glamorous facade, the hospitality industry is built upon the core values of empathy, compassion, and dedication. It serves as a gateway to connect people from different backgrounds and foster cultural understanding, promoting a more inclusive society.

### **Who is your mentor or role model in the hospitality industry?**

My guiding star in the hospitality industry is Brad Maclellan, the General Manager of The Bruce Hotel in Stratford. He has helped shape the person that I am today and for that, I cannot express my gratitude enough.

### **What do you consider to be your career milestone?**

My current goal is to achieve my golden keys. Since last year, I have been working towards earning the prestigious Les Clefs d'Or distinction.

### **In what area(s) does the hospitality industry need to improve?**

One area relates to inclusivity and the acceptance of diversity, not just within the workforce, but also among our guests. Despite progress, certain biases and lack of understanding can persist.

### **What are the key attributes that a hospitality leader should have?**

Same as what I believe to be the core pillars of the industry; Empathy, Compassion, and Dedication!

### **What is your view about the current state of customer service in the hospitality industry?**

I have noticed a major shift in attitudes since the COVID-19 pandemic. One thing I have noticed is that the industry is focusing more on personalization. There is more awareness that each guest is unique, with their own preferences and needs.

### **How long have you been in the hospitality industry?**

I have been a part of this industry professionally, for more than seven years, and academically for six years.

### **What attracted you to the hospitality industry?**

My existence has been steeped in the gracious spirit of hospitality for as long as memory serves me. My esteemed grandfather was the pioneer behind one of the earliest bed and breakfast establishments within the idyllic confines of a sublime coastal town in India. A few years after his passing away, my grandmother resuscitated the legacy he had left behind. I was her eager accomplice, immersing myself in the intricate choreography of hospitality at an age when most are just finding their feet.

### **You currently work as a Concierge at the Park Hyatt Toronto, what made you decide to become a Concierge?**

Indeed, my journey within this industry is an epic tale! I have donned many hats, experiencing the dynamics of service, kitchen, housekeeping, and front desk operations. Yet, it was in the role of a concierge that I truly found my calling. I have been inspired and influenced by my long-time mentor, Brad Maclellan.



# 2023 International Hospitality Hall of Fame®

The International Hospitality Institute and the International Hospitality Institute's Educational Foundation (a non-profit 501 © (3) organization) are delighted to announce the nominees for the 2023 International Hospitality Hall of Fame®.

Each year, IHIEF will induct deserving hospitality leaders into the International Hospitality Hall of Fame®. Honorees will be individuals who have had a global influence on the hospitality industry. The Hall of Fame will be a living testament, celebrating the lives and legacies of our industry's trailblazers and visionaries, and inspiring future generations.

Honorees will be featured permanently on the International Hospitality Hall of Fame® website (IHHFM.org) as well as the Hospitality Walk of Fame and Museum when the physical sites are developed.



# MEET THE 2023 NOMINEES

Listed in alphabetical order

Anne Beiler  
Anne Sacher  
Anthony Bourdain  
Anthony Melchiorri  
Arne Sorenson  
Auguste Escoffier  
Barry Sternlicht  
Beatrice Tollman  
Bill Marriott Jr.  
Caroline Rose Hunt  
Cecil B Day  
Cesar Ritz  
Charles Forte  
Christine Duffy  
Conrad Hilton  
CP Krishnan Nair  
Curtis Carlson  
Danny Meyer

David Kong  
Ellsworth Statler  
Ernest Henderson  
Fred Harvey  
Geoffrey Kent  
Georg Rafael  
Gerard Pellisson  
Henry Flagler  
Ho Kwon Ping  
Horst Schulze  
Howard Johnson  
Ian Schrager  
Isadore Sharp  
Jack DeBoer  
Jay Pritzker  
Jerry Inzerillo  
John Q Hammons  
John Willard Marriott

Julia Child  
Kemmons Wilson  
Kwek Leng Beng  
Marilyn Carlson Nelson  
Michael Eisner  
Mohan Singh Oberoi  
Paul Dubrule  
Ray Kroc  
Richard Branson  
Robert Johnson  
Robert Kuok  
Sheila Johnson  
Solomon Kerzner  
Stevan Porter  
Susan Arnold  
Ted Arison  
Wilhelmina Skogh  
William Waldorf Astor



# NOMINEE PROFILES



## ANNA SACHER

Anna Sacher, born on February 16, 1859, was an Austrian hotelier who operated the Hotel Sacher in Vienna, Austria. She was married to Eduard Sacher, who was a hotelier and restaurateur. When Eduard died, she took over the operation of the hotel. Under her management, the Hotel Sacher became one of the most renowned hotels in Europe.



## ANNE BEILER

Anne Beiler, born on January 16, 1949, is a businesswoman and founder of Auntie Anne's Pretzels. Born into an Amish family in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Beiler started making pretzels in 1987. Despite having only an 8th-grade education, Beiler was able to successfully grow her business into a nationally respected brand.



## ANTHONY BOURDAIN

Anthony Bourdain was born on June 25, 1956 in New York City. He was a Chef, Writer, and TV host. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, Bourdain worked in several restaurants including the Brasserie Les Halles in Manhattan, the Supper Club, and Sullivan's among others. He is the author of the book, Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly. He was the host of Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown on CNN.



## ANTHONY MELCHIORRI

Anthony Melchiorri is a hospitality expert and television personality. He was the host of the Travel Channel's Hotel Impossible show, which he created and for which he served as co-executive producer.



## ARNE SORENSON



Arne Morris Sorenson served as the CEO of Marriott International from 2012 until his death in 2021. He graduated from Luther College in Iowa and the University of Minnesota Law School before joining Marriott International as an associate general counsel in 1996. He later assumed roles with increasing responsibility including Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer. In 2021, he assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer. He oversaw the acquisition of the Renaissance Hotels portfolio and Starwood Hotel & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.

## AUGUSTE ESCOFFIER



Auguste Escoffier, born on October 28, 1846, was a French chef and restaurateur. He worked with Cesar Ritz at the Ritz Hotel in Paris and the Carlton Hotel in London. He was known as the King of Chefs and the Chef of Kings. He wrote the culinary guide, *Le Guide Culinaire*.

## BARRY STERNLICHT



Barry Stuart Sternlicht is the Chairman and co-founder of Starwood Capital Group, an investment fund that manages over \$60 billion in assets. He is also Chairman of Starwood Property Trust. While at Starwood Hotels, Barry oversaw the creation of W Hotels and the Westin Heavenly Bed.

## BEATRICE TOLLMAN



Beatrice Tollman is a co-founder of the Red Carnation Hotel brand, a company she formed with her husband, Stanley. After operating hotels in South Africa, including the Tollman Towers Hotel in Johannesburg, she relocated to London with her husband where they launched the Red Carnation Hotels. She also leads the Travel Corp., which owns several travel companies.



## BILL MARRIOTT JR.

John Willard "Bill" Marriott Jr. was born on March 25, 1932, to Alice Marriott and J. Willard Marriott. He is the executive chairman of Marriott International, a company he joined in 1956. He grew the company founded by his father into the world's largest hotel chain.



## CAROLINE ROSE HUNT

Caroline Rose Hunt was an American businesswoman and hotelier who founded the Rosewood Hotels and Resorts company in 1979. She served as Honorary Chairman until her death in 2018.



## CECIL B. DAY

Cecil B. Day was a hotelier and founder of the Days Inn hotel brand. He was born on December 10, 1934, in Georgia, United States. After graduating from the Georgia Institute of Technology, he opened his first Days Inn in Tybee, Georgia. Using an effective franchise model, he grew the Days Inn brand rapidly.



## CESAR RITZ

César Ritz, born on February 23, 1850, was a Swiss hotelier and founder of the Ritz Hotel and Carlton Hotel brands, which would later become the Ritz Carlton Hotels. Known as the King of Hoteliers and the Hotelier to Kings, some of the hotels he developed include the Carlton Hotel, London, the Ritz Hotel London, the Ritz Hotel Madrid, and the Hôtel Ritz in the Place Vendôme, Paris.

## CHARLES FORTE



Charles Forte was born on November 26, 1908 in Italy. He emigrated with his family to Scotland when he was four years old. He founded the Forte Group, a company that developed and operated hospitality properties in various locations. He entered the hotel and catering business when he was 26 years old. His first acquisition was the Café Royal in 1954. The Fort Group expanded, investing in restaurants, and hotels such as the Travelodge Hotel brand, the Savoy Hotel, and others.

## CHRISTINE DUFFY



Christine Duffy is the President of Carnival Cruise Lines. She worked in the travel industry for several years before becoming the President and CEO of Maritz Travel. She has also served as the chairwoman of Meeting Professionals International, and President of Cruise Lines International Association.

## CONRAD HILTON



Conrad Hilton Sr., born on December 25, 1887, was the founder of the Hilton Hotels chain. He acquired his first hotel, the Mobley Hotel in Cisco, Texas in 1919. He would later acquire several other hotels including the Abilene Hilton, the Dallas Hilton, the El Pason Hilton, and the Waco Hilton. In 1939, he built what is now known as the Hotel Andaluz in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Hilton Hotels would go on to become the world's largest hotel company.

## CP KRISHNAN NAIR



Captain Krishnan Nair was the founder of The Leela Group. He served in the Indian Army and was fondly referred to as Captain Nair. Nair opened his hotel company in 1983. He opened the first Leela Hotel in 1987 in Mumbai. Later, he opened the Leela Palace in Bangalore, The Leela Goa, followed by the Leela Beach Resort in Thiruvananthapuram. He died in May 2014



## CURTIS CARLSON

John Willard "Bill" Marriott Jr. was born on March 25, 1932, to Alice Marriott and J. Willard Marriott. He is the executive chairman of Marriott International, a company he joined in 1956. He grew the company founded by his father into the world's largest hotel chain.



## DANNY MEYER

Danny Meyer is the founder and Chief Executive officer of Union Square Hospitality Group which comprises some of New York's most acclaimed restaurants: Union Square Café, Gramercy Tavern, The Modern, Maialino, and more.



## DAVID KONG

David Kong is the former President and CEO of Best Western International. He joined Best Western Hotels & Resorts in 2001 and became CEO in 2004. During his tenure as CEO, Kong formed BWH Hotel Group and extended the company's reach globally.



## ELLSWORTH STATLER

Ellsworth Milton, born on October 26, 1863, was a businessman and hotelier. He was the founder of the Statler Hotels.

Statler opened his first hotel in Buffalo, New York in 1907. He would later develop hotels in various cities including St. Louis, Cleveland, New York, and Boston. His last hotel was the Boston Park Plaza hotel which he opened in Boston in 1927.



## ERNEST HENDERSON

Ernest Henderson was a co-founder of the Sheraton Hotels brand. He launched the brand with his Harvard classmate, Robert Moore, when they acquired the Continental Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



In 1937, they acquired their second hotel, the Stonehaven Hotel in Springfield, Massachusetts. Later, they would acquire the Copley Plaza Hotel in 1941 and several other properties, growing the Sheraton brand into a national brand.

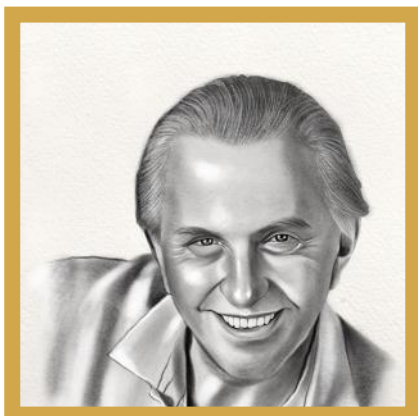


## FRED HARVEY

Frederick Harvey, born on June 27, 1835, was a businessman, hotelier, and restaurateur who is believed to have created the first chain of restaurants in the United States.



Harvey and his family operated their hotel and restaurant chain until it was sold in 1968. By 1901, the year Fred Harvey died, the Fred Harvey Company operated 15 hotels, 47 restaurants, and 30 dining cars that served the Santa Fe Railway.



## GEOFFREY KENT

Geoffrey JW Kent, born on July 14, 1942, is the Chairman Emeritus of Abercrombie & Kent, an international luxury and adventure travel company that he founded. He is credited with introducing the first luxury photographic African safari in 1962. Geoffrey Kent is one of the founding members of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) where he was Chairman for 6 years. Kent is a pioneer in the tourism industry, having created the first luxury photographic African safari in 1962.



## GEORG RAFAEL

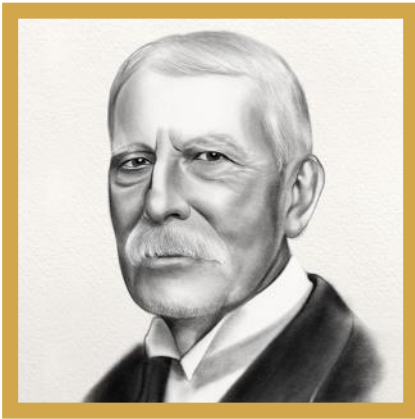
Georg Rafael is the cofounder of Regent International Hotels. Regent developed and operated several properties in various parts of the world. Rafael later founded the Rafael Group based in Monaco which is involved in hotel investments and developments.





## GERARD PELLISSON

Gerard Pellisson, a cofounder of Accor Hotels, was born on February 9, 1932, in France. He partnered with Paul Dubrule to launch the company in 1967. The partners opened their first Novotel property in 1967 in Lille Lesquin. In 1972, Accor opened the first Novotel outside of France in Neuchâtel in Switzerland. In 1973, they opened the first Ibis property in Bordeaux.



## HENRY FLAGLER

Henry Flagler, born on January 2, 1830, was the founder of Standard Oil and a hotel developer. Often referred to as the founder of Miami and Palm Beach cities, he developed several iconic hotels including the Ponce de Leon Hotel, the Alcazar Hotel, the Casa Monica Hotel, the Royal Poinciana Hotel, and the Palm Beach Inn, which was later renamed as the Breakers.



## HO KWON PING

Ho Kwon Ping is the executive chairman of Banyan Tree Holdings, based in Singapore. The Banyan Tree Holdings owns hotels, resorts, homes, and retail companies. Ping is the current Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Singapore Management University.



## HORST SCHULZE

Horst Schulze is a co-founder and former COO of the Ritz Carlton Hotel Company. He started his career as a server's assistant in a German resort town. He worked for Hilton Hotels and Hyatt Hotels Corporation before becoming one of the founding members of The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company in 1983. At Ritz Carlton, Schulze created the operating and service standards that have become world famous. After leaving The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company, Schulze founded The Capella Hotel Group.



## HOWARD JOHNSON

Howard Johnson is the founder of the Howard Johnson restaurant chain and later the Howard Johnson's Motor Lodges. Howard Johnson opened his first restaurant in 1925. He would grow his company to become the largest restaurant chain in the USA. He overcame many adversities on his way to success. The first Howard Johnson Motor Lodge opened in Savannah, Georgia in 1954. His Howard Johnson Motor Lodges brand was later sold to Wyndham Hotels.



## IAN SCHRAGER

Ian Schrager was born on July 19, 1946. He is a hotelier and businessman who has founded several hotel brands. He was a co-owner of the renowned Studio 54 nightclub in New York. He was also a co-founder of the Palladium nightclub. He opened the Morgan Hotel, his first property, in 1984. He later opened the Royalton Hotel and the Paramount Hotel, both in New York City. He launched the EDITION hotel brand in partnership with Marriott International. Most recently, he launched the Public Hotel brand.



## ISADORE SHARP

Isadore Sharp, born on October 8, 1931, is a hotel developer and the founder and chairman of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

After graduating from college, Sharp worked for his father's real estate company. He opened the Four Seasons Hotel in 1960 in Toronto. The Four Seasons Hotel company now has over 100 hotels worldwide.



## JACK DEBOER

Jack DeBoer is the founder of several hotel brands such as Residence Inn, Summerfield Suites, Value Place Hotels, and Candlewood Suites.

After designing and opening the first Residence Inn in 1975 in Wichita, Kansas, DeBoer opened or franchised 103 more Residence Inns before he sold the chain to Marriott in 1987. He co-founded the Summerfield brand in 1988 and sold it to Hyatt. In 1995, he founded the Candlewood Hotel Company and sold it to IHG in 2003 after opening 130 hotels.



## JAY PRITZKER

Jay Pritzker was born on August 26, 1922, in Chicago, Illinois. He formed the Hyatt Hotel company in 1957 with his brother, Donald Pritzker. He purchased Ticketmaster in 1982 and sold it in 1993.



## JERRY INZERILLO

Jerry Inzerillo is the CEO of Diriyah Gate Development Authority (DGDA), a tourism and cultural development project in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Before his current role, he served as CEO of Forbes Travel Guide. With over 50 years of experience, Jerry has received several awards for his work.



## JOHN Q HAMMONS

Born in 1919, John Quentin Hammons was the cofounder of Winegardner and Hammons and later founder of John Q. Hammons in 1969. He opened 67 Holiday Inn Hotels after negotiating a franchise license with Kemmons Wilson, founder of the Holiday Inn brand. When he died on May 26, 2013, John Q. Hammons had developed over 200 hotels in 40 states.



## JOHN WILLARD MARRIOTT

John Willard Marriott Sr. was the founder of the Marriott Hotels company. Born on September 17, 1900, he started his company from a root beer stand in Washington, DC. He opened his first motel in 1957. He grew the company to become one of the largest corporations in the USA with interests in hotels, restaurants, cruise ships, and other sectors.



## JULIA CHILD

Julia Child was born on August 15, 1912. She was a chef, television presenter, and author. A promoter of French cuisine, she wrote several cookbooks and appeared on several TV programs.



## KEMMONS WILSON

Kemmons Wilson, born on January 5, 1913, was an American hotelier and businessman. He was the founder of the Holiday Inn hotel brand. The first Holiday Inn opened in 1952 in Memphis. In 1968, the 1000th Holiday Inn opened in San Antonio, Texas. Wilson also founded another hotel company, named Wilson World.



## KWEK LENG BENG

Kwek Leng Beng, born in 1941, is the executive chairman of Hong Leong Group Singapore, a conglomerate with over 300 companies. In 2019, Forbes estimated his net worth at US\$3.4 billion. The Hong Leong Group opened its first property - the King's Hotel in Singapore in the early 1970s. The company is now the largest hotel owner in Singapore. The group owns the Millennium & Copthorne Hotels (M&C) which has over 145 hotels in its portfolio across the globe. The Hong Leong Group also owns several luxury hotels including The St. Regis Singapore, the W Singapore, Sentosa Cove, the Millenium Hilton Bangkok, the Grand Hyatt Taipei, the JW Marriott Hotel Hong Kong, and the Millenium Hilton New York Downtown.



## MARILYN CARLSON NELSON

Marilyn Carlson Nelson, born on August 19, 1939, is the former chairman and CEO of Carlson. The Carlson group includes Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Radisson Blu, Radisson Red Hotels, and Country Inns & Suites.

Marilyn has served on several boards including Exxon Mobil, Qwest Communications, and First Bank System. In 2014, she received the Oslo Business for Peace Award.



## MICHAEL EISNER

Michael Dammann Eisner is the former chairman and CEO of The Walt Disney Company. He joined the company in 1984 and served until 2005. Before joining Disney, Eisner was president of Paramount Pictures where he worked from 1976 to 1984.



## MOHAN SINGH OBEROI

Mohan Singh Oberoi, born on August 15, 1881, was an Indian hotelier and businessman. He was the founder of Oberoi Hotels & Resorts. Formed in 1934, his Oberoi Group operated hotels, luxury cruises, and restaurants, and provided travel and tour services. He was also the founder of East India Hotels which he formed in 1948. His Oberoi Center for Learning and Development provides hospitality education to students in India.



## PAUL DUBRULE

Paul Dubrule, a cofounder of Accor Hotels, was born on July 6, 1934 in France. He partnered with Gerard Pellison to launch the company in 1967. The partners opened their first Novotel property in 1967 in Lille Lesquin. In 1972, Accor opened the first Novotel outside of France in Neuchâtel in Switzerland. In 1973, they opened the first Ibis property in Bordeaux.



## RAY KROC

Ray Kroc, born in 1902, purchased the restaurant giant McDonald's from the McDonald brothers in 1961 and served as its CEO from 1967 to 1973. Kroc successfully expanded the McDonald's company, turning it into a global powerhouse. He died in 1984.



## RICHARD BRANSON

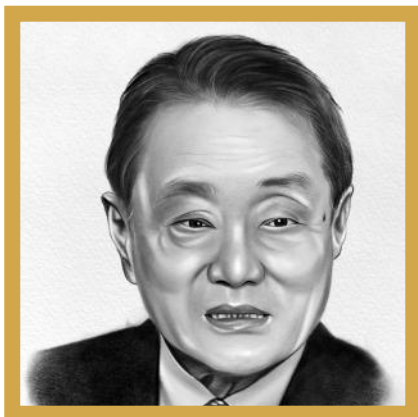
Sir Richard Branson is the founder of the Virgin Group which controls over 400 companies including Virgin Hotels. Virgin Hotels was formed in 2010. Branson also launched Virgin Limited Edition which operates exclusive private islands and resorts.



## ROBERT JOHNSON

Robert Louis Johnson, born on April 8, 1946, is an American businessman, hotel investor, media mogul, and philanthropist. He is the founder of RLJ Lodging Trust which owns 96 hotels with approximately 21,200 rooms located in 23 states in the USA.

Johnson is the co-founder of Black Entertainment Television (BET) and the former majority owner of the Charlotte Bobcats.



## ROBERT KUOK

Robert Kuok was born on October 6, 1923 in Malaysia. He founded Shangri-La Hotels in 1971, opening his first property in Singapore. Shangri-La currently operates several brands including Shangri-La, Hotel Jen, Kerry Hotels, and Traders Hotels.



## SHEILA JOHNSON

Sheila Johnson is a businesswoman and hotel developer. She is the CEO of Salamander Hotels and Resorts which she launched in 2005. Salamander Hotels owns several hotels including the Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club, the Half Moon in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and the Salamander Resort and Spa, among others.



## SOLOMON KERZNER

Solomon 'Sol' Kerzner, was born on August 23, 1935, in Durban, South Africa. He was the founder of Southern Sun Hotel Group and Sun International, the largest hotel company in South Africa. H was also the CEO of Kerzner International. Kerzner was also the developer of Sun City Resort in Africa and the Mohegan Sun in Uncasville, Connecticut.



## STEVAN PORTER

Stevan Porter was the president of the America's region for IHG, a company he joined in 2001. He was elected to the board of the company in 2001. He started his career in hospitality with Stouffer Hotels in 1976 before joining Promus Hotels. He worked for Hilton Hotels from 1990 to 2001 in various leadership roles.

Stevan served on the Board of Directors for the IAH Owner's Association. He was also Chairman of the American Hotel & Lodging Association Government Affairs Committee, Chairman of the Discover America Partnership, and Vice Chairman of the Travel Business Roundtable.



## SUSAN ARNOLD

Susan E. Arnold is a business executive and former chairman of The Walt Disney Company. She was appointed as Chairman of the board at the Walt Disney Company in 2021, the first female to serve in the role. She served in the position until January 2023.



## TED ARISON

Ted Arison was an Israeli businessman who co-founded Norwegian Cruise Lines in 1966 with Knut Kloster. The company was launched in Miami. He later launched Carnival Cruise Lines in 1972.

In 1981, Arison created the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts based in Miami. He was the owner of the Miami Heat and the founder of the Arison Foundation, a philanthropic organization.

## WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR

William Waldorf Astor, born on March 31, 1848, was a businessman, hotel developer, politician, and philanthropist. He built the Waldorf Hotel in 1890. In 1908, he built the Waldorf Hotel in London's West End.



## WILHELMINA SKOGH

Wilhelmina Skogh, born on December 14, 1849 in Sweden, was a hotelier and restaurateur. At 27, she built her first property, the Railroad Hotel in Storvik, near Sandviken. She formed the Wilhelmina Wahlgren AB company, which would later own and manage several hotel properties. At the age of 53, she took over as Managing Director of Grand Hôtel in Stockholm. She built the Grand Hôtel Royal, an addition to the existing hotel building.





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# 2023 International Hospitality Hall of Fame®

## 2023 Honorees

The International Hospitality Institute and the International Hospitality Institute's Educational Foundation (a non-profit 501 © (3) organization) are delighted to announce the nominees for the 2023 International Hospitality Hall of Fame®.

Each year, IHIEF will induct deserving hospitality leaders into the International Hospitality Hall of Fame®. Honorees will be individuals who have had a global influence on the hospitality industry. The Hall of Fame will be a living testament, celebrating the lives and legacies of our industry's trailblazers and visionaries, and inspiring future generations.

Honorees will be featured permanently on the International Hospitality Hall of Fame® website (IHHFM.org) as well as the Hospitality Walk of Fame and Museum, when the physical sites are developed.



# MEET THE 2023 HONOREES

Listed in alphabetical order



## ANTHONY BOURDAIN

Anthony Bourdain was born on June 25, 1956 in New York City. He was a Chef, Writer, and TV host. After graduating from the Culinary Institute of America, Bourdain worked in several restaurants including the Brasserie Les Halles in Manhattan, the Supper Club, and Sullivan's among others. He is the author of the book, *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly*. He was the host of *Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown* on CNN.



## ARNE SORENSON

Arne Morris Sorenson served as the CEO of Marriott International from 2012 until his death in 2021. He graduated from Luther College in Iowa and the University of Minnesota Law School before joining Marriott International as an associate general counsel in 1996. He later assumed roles with increasing responsibility including Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer, and Chief Operating Officer. In 2021, he assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer. He oversaw the acquisition of the Renaissance Hotels portfolio and Starwood Hotel & Resorts Worldwide, Inc.



## BARRY STERNLICHT

Barry Stuart Sternlicht is the Chairman and co-founder of Starwood Capital Group, an investment fund that manages over \$60 billion in assets. He is also Chairman of Starwood Property Trust. While at Starwood Hotels, Barry oversaw the creation of W Hotels and the Westin Heavenly Bed.



## BILL MARRIOTT, JR.

John Willard "Bill" Marriott Jr. was born on March 25, 1932, to Alice Marriott and J Willard Marriott. He is the executive chairman of Marriott International, a company he joined in 1956. He grew the company founded by his father into the world's largest hotel chain..



## CAROLINE ROSE HUNT

Caroline Rose Hunt, born on January 8, 1923, was an American businesswoman and hotelier who founded the Rosewood Hotels and Resorts company in 1979. She served as Honorary Chairman until her death in 2018.



## CESAR RITZ

César Ritz, born on February 23, 1850, was a Swiss hotelier and founder of the Ritz Hotel and Carlton Hotel brands, which would later become the Ritz Carlton Hotels. Known as the King of Hoteliers and the Hotelier to Kings, some of the hotels he developed include the Carlton Hotel, London, the Ritz Hotel London, the Ritz Hotel Madrid, and the Hôtel Ritz in the Place Vendôme, Paris.



## CONRAD HILTON

Conrad Hilton Sr., born on December 25, 1887, was the founder of the Hilton Hotels chain. He acquired his first hotel, the Mobley Hotel in Cisco, Texas in 1919. He would later acquire several other hotels including the Abilene Hilton, the Dallas Hilton, the El Paso Hilton, and the Waco Hilton. In 1939, he built what is now known as the Hotel Andaluz in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Hilton Hotels would go on to become the world's largest hotel company.



## DANNY MEYER

Danny Meyer is the founder and Chief Executive Officer of Union Square Hospitality Group, which comprises some of New York's most acclaimed restaurants: Union Square Cafe, Gramercy Tavern, The Modern, Maialino, and more. Danny and USHG also founded Shake Shack, the modern-day "roadside" burger restaurant for which he serves as Chairman of the Board. He is the author of the book, *Setting the Table, The Transforming Power of Hospitality in Service*. Today, he continues to advocate for the hospitality industry and is a globally respected voice on all issues regarding hospitality and hospitality workers.



## DAVID KONG

David Kong is the former President and CEO of Best Western International. He joined Best Western Hotels & Resorts in 2001 and became CEO in 2004. During his tenure as CEO, Kong formed BWH Hotel Group and extended the company's reach globally.



## HORST SCHULZE

Horst Schulze is a co-founder and former COO of the Ritz Carlton Hotel Company. He started his career as a server's assistant in a German resort town. He worked for Hilton Hotels and Hyatt Hotels Corporation before becoming one of the founding members of The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company in 1983. At Ritz Carlton, Schulze created the operating and service standards that have become world famous. After leaving The Ritz Carlton Hotel Company, Schulze founded The Capella Hotel Group.



## IAN SCHRAGER

Ian Schrager was born on July 19, 1946. He is a hotelier and businessman who has founded several hotel brands. He was a co-owner of the renowned Studio 54 nightclub in New York. He was also a co-founder of the Palladium nightclub. He opened the Morgan Hotel, his first property, in 1984. He later opened the Royalton Hotel and the Paramount Hotel, both in New York City. He launched the EDITION hotel brand in partnership with Marriott International. Most recently, he launched the Public Hotel brand.



## ISADORE SHARP

Isadore Sharp, born on October 8, 1931, is a hotel developer and the founder and chairman of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

After graduating from college, Sharp worked for his father's real estate company. He opened the Four Seasons Hotel in 1960 in Toronto. The Four Seasons Hotel company now has over 100 hotels worldwide.



## JOHN WILLARD MARRIOTT

John Willard Marriott, Sr. was the founder of the Marriott Hotels company. Born on September 17, 1900, he started his company from a root beer stand in Washington, DC. He opened his first motel in 1957. He grew the company to become one of the largest corporations in the USA with interests in hotels, restaurants, cruise ships, and other sectors.



## JULIA CHILD

Julia Child was born on August 15, 1912. She was a chef, television presenter, and author. A promoter of French cuisine, she wrote several cookbooks and appeared on several TV programs.



## MARILYN CARLSON NELSON

Marilyn Carlson Nelson, born on August 19, 1939, is the former chairman and CEO of Carlson. The Carlson group includes Carlson Wagonlit Travel, Radisson Blu, Radisson Red Hotels, and Country Inns & Suites.

Marilyn has served on several boards including Exxon Mobil, Qwest Communications, and First Bank System. In 2014, she received the Oslo Business for Peace Award.



## MOHAN SINGH OBEROI

Mohan Singh Oberoi, born on August 15, 1881, was an Indian hotelier and businessman. He was the founder of Oberoi Hotels & Resorts. Formed in 1934, his Oberoi Group operated hotels, luxury cruises, and restaurants and provided travel and tour services. He was also the founder of East India Hotels which he formed in 1948. His Oberoi Center for Learning and Development provides hospitality education to students in India.



## RICHARD BRANSON

Sir Richard Branson is the founder of the Virgin Group which controls over 400 companies including Virgin Hotels. Virgin Hotels was formed in 2010. Branson also launched Virgin Limited Edition which operates exclusive private islands and resorts.



## SHEILA JOHNSON

Sheila Johnson is a businesswoman and hotel developer. She is the CEO of Salamander Hotels and Resorts which she launched in 2005. Salamander Hotels owns several hotels including the Innisbrook Resort and Golf Club, the Half Moon in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and the Salamander Resort and Spa, among others.



## WILLIAM WALDORF ASTOR

William Waldorf Astor, born on March 31, 1848, was a businessman, hotel developer, politician, and philanthropist. He built the Waldorf Hotel in 1890. In 1908, he built the Waldorf Hotel in London's West End.

# TWENTY-FIVE STARS BY 2025 THE LUXURY VISION AND VISIONARY GUIDING THE BOCA RATON RESORT

BY MICAH SOLOMON

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Daniel Hostettler

Let's step into the world of luxury hospitality with Daniel Hostettler, the still-youthful, Swiss-bred hotelier with a remarkable eight Forbes Five Star awards (yes, that's 40 stars!) under his belt, and revel in his passion and techniques for exceptional guest service. From his past performance at Rhode Island's Ocean House to his more recent achievements in South Florida at The Boca Raton, Hostettler's unwavering dedication to excellence sets him apart in the industry.

Hostettler first charmed the Forbes Travel Guide and the luxury hospitality space at large with his performance at Ocean House, a grand Victorian-style resort in New England. Starting with zero stars after a to-the-studs (actually, to-the-foundation) renovation, the oceanside property garnered three simultaneous Five Star ratings for its lodging, food, and spa under his direction. Not to be left behind for long, the Weekapaug Inn, Ocean House's sibling down the road, soon added another five stars to Hostettler's galaxy.

He also served the larger hospitality community for four years as President of Relais & Chateaux North America, where he focused on standards of luxury and innovation for the organization of more than 580 smaller luxury inns and restaurants, some with five stars to their names

themselves (and, in the case of a storied member, The Inn at Little Washington, three Michelin stars as well).

Moving forward to Hostettler's recent move out of the Ocean State and southward to Florida: You can now find him at work transforming The Boca Raton, a luxury property with a daunting 950 keys (rooms) on premises and a storied (but previously starless) history. Owned by Michael Dell through his MSD Partners, and managed by Hostettler as President and CEO, the resort has set its sights uniquely high with an ambitious mantra: "Twenty-five [five Forbes 5-Star awards] by 2025."

And, clearly, The Boca Raton team means business, already having landed two of those (for The Boca Raton Beach Club hotel and Spa Palmera), leaving "just" three Five Star awards to go to reach the goal in the not-quite-three years remaining.

## STEERING MULTIPLE PROPERTIES TO FIVE-STAR GLORY

Managing a single property and achieving a high level of service can be challenging. And what Hostettler decided immediately, in a vision he was able to sell to the Dell Team, is that if that property has 950 keys, it's simply too much for today's luxury traveler. So, under Hostettler's leadership, what was "a pretty standard convention hotel," albeit one known for its stunning Addison Mizner architecture, has metamorphosed into five distinct properties, each with its own unique charm and allure. This transformation didn't come cheap; after an investment "in excess of \$225 million," these properties now stand tall, ready to welcome guests. But the transformation doesn't stop there - a second round of renovations is on the horizon.

However, the challenge lies not in the physical transformation alone. How does one ensure a high level of guest service across all these distinct properties? This, says Hostettler, is one of the reasons he has embraced the rigorous Forbes Five Star standards as his guiding light, embracing the 600 Forbes standards and making them his—and his team's—own.

Hostettler's belief is that while service styles may differ—some of The Boca Raton's component hotels and restaurants are less formal, others more so—the standard of service should never waver. "We aren't going to succeed in our Five Star goals if anyone anywhere on our campus gives guests anything less than a Five Star experience itself because there is definitely overlap in where our guests spend different parts of the day, and where they go to dine."

The journey to Five Star service is far from a solo venture. It requires a strong partnership between management and ownership. Hostettler underscores the importance of having the right owners when pursuing a five-star level of service. He credits MSD Partners, Michael Dell's investment entity, for their long-term vision.

Beyond that, it is his five separate leadership teams helming the five hotels that make the difference day to day, along with the associates who interact with guests daily.

According to Hostettler, the journey towards Five Star service demands a relentless and sustained dedication that can only be achieved with an eye on what is and should be, coming down the road. Without this forward-looking perspective, new, short-term priorities can easily derail the pursuit of excellence. "Because, without an eye kept on a far horizon, there will always come a new, short-term priority that gets in the way of where we want to be heading. The most important part of my job here, above all others, is to keep everyone's eye on that horizon. If I do that successfully, I can trust my teams across the resort to take us there."

## THE FIVE HOTELS AT THE BOCA RATON, AFTER REPOSITIONING

- **Tower**, at 27 stories the tallest building in Boca Raton, and a local landmark, ever since it was built in 1969, is now a lively, family-friendly luxury destination after a \$65 million to-the-studs renovation and an inspired transformation of its interior by the Rockwell Group. Among other playful touches, youthful guests have two robot butlers at their service, Johnnie and Ethel, who are on call to serve snacks and popcorn, as well as activity packages such as "Family Game Night" or "Movie Night," from a menu that kids are welcome to order from all by themselves.

- **Yacht Club**, with only around a hundred rooms, all served by (non-robotic) butlers, is intended for adults sans kids; "Parents can have a romantic interlude here while grandparents are enjoying the kids in Tower—or vice versa, I suppose!"

- **Cloister**, the original 261-room hotel, opened in 1926 as The Ritz-Carlton Cloister Inn, is particularly popular with conference attendees (its guest mix is 80% groups, 20% leisure) as it adjoins the 80,000 SF conference center.

- **Beach Club** has 212 rooms on its own private beach. Its positioning is a little more fashion-forward and contemporary, "approximately along the lines of the Four Seasons Surf Club in Surfside, FL."

- **Bungalows**, a private resort behind a second set of gates, with its own concierge team and separate amenities, is intended for longer-term stays, either for people who want to have "their wintertime place in Florida" as well as, in the summertime, locals (often newly local) or while they're gutting and renovating their own properties, a cohort that, says, Hostettler, "we're making a pretty good summer living with."

### About the Author

Micah Solomon has contributed articles to Forbes. He is the author of the book, *The Heart of Hospitality: Great Hotel and Restaurant Workers Share Their Secrets*. He is President and CEO, of Four Aces Inc.





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# INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME® AND MUSEUM



In 2022, the International Hospitality Institute announced the launch of the International Hospitality Hall of Fame® and Museum. The announcement was met with excitement across the global hospitality industry. Each year, IHI will induct a few hospitality leaders from all over the world into the International Hospitality Hall of Fame®. The International Hospitality Hall of Fame® is hosted online at IHHFM.org ([www.HospitalityHallofFame.org](http://www.HospitalityHallofFame.org)). IHI's vision is to develop a physical location for the International Hospitality Hall of Fame® and Museum. Hospitality professionals and members of the public will be able to visit to learn about the rich history of hospitality.

The site will feature exhibits and artifacts, with each honoree's name inscribed in the Hospitality Walk of Fame. The International Hospitality Hall of Fame® and Museum is the culmination of several years of work by IHI. 2023's nominees and honorees are featured in this issue of the Global Hospitality Magazine.

**For more information, contact  
[info@InternationalHospitalityInstitute.com](mailto:info@InternationalHospitalityInstitute.com)**



**The International Hospitality Hall of Fame® and Museum is the culmination of several years of work by IHI. 2023's nominees and honorees are featured in this issue of the Global Hospitality Magazine.**

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**INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY HALL OF FAME  
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