

LODGING



5

**FRESH
LOOK**
PROPERTIES
SHOW OFF
MAJOR
REMODELS

»
»
»
**BETTER
TOGETHER**

MARRYING LUXURY
AND SUSTAINABILITY

HOW HE DOES IT

MAXIMIZING
RENOVATION
RETURNS



ATTRACTING
GUESTS
DURING THE

**OFF-
SEASON**

ALAN J. FUERSTMAN
FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN, & CEO
MONTAGE INTERNATIONAL

Carriage and Character



YOU NEVER GET A SECOND CHANCE AT A FIRST IMPRESSION. This adage is especially true when applied to a guest's experience at a hotel. The first time she walks into the lobby, the moment he opens the door to his room, the view from the window—those moments will color a traveler's entire stay. Hoteliers know this, and every single one of them wants to put their property's best foot forward when welcoming guests for all types of stays.

In this issue of *LODGING*, we explore how hoteliers use design to communicate to their guests exactly what their properties are all about. The feature story, "Renovate, Remodel, Restore," spotlights five hotels that recently underwent massive renovations. Whether updating a historic building with a modern design or repositioning a property to better perform in its comp set, the hoteliers *LODGING* spoke with offered a wealth of insights and knowledge that can be applied to properties across all market segments. These five properties have transformed their look, and convey a carriage and character that attracts the eye as well as guests.

I also cannot talk about character without mentioning Montage International CEO Alan Fuerstman, who is featured on this month's cover. With Montage, Fuerstman has developed a portfolio of sustainability-focused luxury properties, proving that the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. By focusing on creating hotels that provide an experience he would want from a luxury property, then incorporating sustainability initiatives that complemented that vision, Fuerstman has truly married the two concepts, and was recently honored with the Environmental Media Association (EMA) Ongoing Commitment Award.

As you look at what your property offers, and what you want it to offer in the future, think of these hoteliers and how they approached all that they accomplished. I know you will find their stories interesting, helpful, and inspiring.

Kate Hughes

LODGING

PRESIDENT
Edward J. McNeill Jr.

PUBLISHER
Holly Kaye

EDITOR
Kate Hughes

ONLINE EDITOR
Christine Killion

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
Shane Hickey

ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR
Jackie Cunnane

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Eileen Keough-Caracappa

EDITORIAL APPRENTICE
Robin McLaughlin

INTERN
Jennifer Goetz

CONTRIBUTORS
Brian Crawford, Jan Freitag, William D. Frye, Ali Hoyt, Robert Mandelbaum, Ellen Meyer

SALES
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING & BUSINESS OPERATIONS: Don Serfass
215-321-9662, ext. 64, fax 215-321-9636
dserfass@lodgingmagazine.com

EASTERN SALES DIRECTOR: Holly Kaye
440-465-0468, fax 215-321-9636
hkaye@lodgingmagazine.com

WESTERN SALES DIRECTOR: Solomon Ortasse
310-526-3988, fax 215-321-9636
sortasse@lodgingmagazine.com

CLASSIFIED/MARKETPLACE:
215-321-9662, ext. 64

CIRCULATION REQUESTS:
dserfass@lodgingmagazine.com

MCNEILL MEDIA GROUP INC.
PRESIDENT: Edward J. McNeill Jr.
ACCOUNTING MANAGER: Simone Sannelli

AMERICAN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION
CHAIR: Mark Carrier
VICE CHAIR: Geoff Ballotti
PRESIDENT/CEO: Katherine Lugar
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/COO: Kevin Carey
CFO: Mike Williams

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENTS: Brad Aldrich, Brian Crawford, Rosanna Maietta, and Kimberly Miles

FOUNDING EDITORS: James A. Pearson and Frances L. Pearson

Published by McNeill Group, Inc., Yardley, PA. Nothing contained in this publication shall constitute an endorsement by the American Hotel & Lodging Association, nor McNeill Group. AHLA disclaims any liability with respect to the use or reliance on any such information. The information contained in this publication is in no way to be construed as a recommendation by AHLA of any industry standard, or as a recommendation of any kind to be adopted or binding upon any member of the hospitality industry.

FRONT DESK

NEWS, IDEAS, AND INSIGHTS

SUCCESS STORY

Why Not Both?

ALAN FUERSTMAN PROVES THAT SUSTAINABILITY AND LUXURY CAN PROSPER TOGETHER IN HOSPITALITY **BY ELLEN MEYER**

ALONG WITH HONOREES INCLUDING NEW YORK MAYOR MICHAEL BLOOMBERG AND ACTOR NATALIE PORTMAN, the hospitality industry's own Alan J. Fuerstman was a recipient of the Environmental Media Association (EMA) Ongoing Commitment Award. Fuerstman, who is founder, chairman, and chief executive officer of Montage International, a luxury hospitality management company, received the first-ever EMA Green Seal for Hospitality for his company's sustainable hotel and resort developments, which include the Montage Beverly Hills, the first

ultra-luxury Gold Certified hotel in Southern California under the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) and Montage Deer Valley, the first LEED-certified resort in Utah.

Fuerstman recently described for *LODGING* his path in the industry and why he says, "Luxury and sustainability can be synonymous" and "Caring for our guests goes hand in hand with our commitment to caring for the environment."

Fuerstman's own involvement in the industry dates back to high school, when he was a part-time doorman at a Marriott hotel in his New Jersey home town. During summer vacations and after college, he continued working



BETTER TOGETHER

Founder, chairman, and CEO of Montage International Alan Fuerstman marries luxury and sustainability in his company's properties.

at Marriott International properties. However, it wasn't until he deferred graduate school plans to take the position of bell captain at the Rancho Las Palmas Resort in Rancho Mirage, California, that he decided he was in the industry to stay.

"That was when I really fell in love with the energy and excitement of the business and decided to make a career of it." He completed Marriott's management training program, and began his ascent through that organization in a variety of roles across different properties, before moving to ITT Sheraton, where he rose to the position of managing director of The Phoenician resort in Scottsdale, Ariz. He accepted his last employee position when Steve Wynn offered him the opportunity to open the Bellagio Casino & Resort in Las Vegas as the hotel's vice president of hotel operations.

Bitten by the entrepreneurial spirit while working for others, in 2000, Fuerstman left the Bellagio and formed his own management company that focused on →

"I found traditional luxury too pretentious and stuffy for the upcoming generation of luxury consumers, who seemed to be looking for an elegant but more understated approach to luxury—one that is comfortable but highly personalized and lower key."

ALAN J. FUERSTMAN
CEO, MONTAGE INTERNATIONAL

→ reinventing luxury for a new generation of guests. The result was Montage Hotels & Resorts, which officially launched in 2003. “I found traditional luxury too pretentious and stuffy for the upcoming generation of luxury consumers, who seemed to be looking for an elegant but more understated approach to luxury—one that is comfortable but highly personalized and lower key.” These guests, too, he says generally have a greater appreciation for the environment in that they are attracted to properties with a sense of place. An example would be his company’s Kapalua Bay property in Maui, where its popular lei-making and ukulele lessons share “the aloha spirit” with guests.

However, recognizing the necessity of a sense of place doesn’t negate Fuerstman’s sense of responsibility for the environment. He traces his commitment to combining luxury and sustainability to a challenge more than a decade ago by eBay founder Pierre Omidyar, who is a friend, business partner, and outspoken advocate of environmentally responsible business practices. “He asked me, ‘Can luxury and sustainability coexist?’ I took that as a serious challenge and wanted to incorporate that into our business and lifestyle. We should be able to operate profitably in

this business with initiatives that are good for the environment.”

Fuerstman stresses that sustainability and luxury are not at odds with one another—quite the contrary—and that it makes sense to design and operate hotels in a way that incorporates green practices. “We made it just a part of how we conduct business,” he says. “It influences design, construction, and operations.” Fuerstman depends on Mark Slyman, director of Technical Services & Sustainability for Montage Hotels & Resorts, to guide the process, noting that minimizing the impact on the local community through building construction practices involves everything from sourcing local materials to selecting materials with recycled content and recycling construction waste. Putting in place operational policies, procedures, and equipment that use environmentally friendly products, and require less energy, he adds, also results in positive returns on investment.

Fuerstman says leading by example in this regard is paramount and crucial to engendering widespread buy-in. “When such practices become a priority with the leadership of a company, they become a priority within an organization, just like any other initiative.”

GOOD ADVICE

MONTAGE INTERNATIONAL FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN, AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER **ALAN J. FUERSTMAN** HAS THESE SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND MAINTAINING SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES THAT ENGENDER BUY-IN FROM EMPLOYEES, THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY, AND GUESTS:

- 1 START WITH A COMMITMENT FROM THE TOP.** “Making it work depends on the leadership and ideas of associates at all levels, but it starts with the CEO. When our associates see we are concerned and share in their passion for the environment, it encourages the kind of creative thinking that gets results.”
- 2 CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENABLES PASSIONATE ASSOCIATES TO TAKE THE LEAD.** “The environmental impact committees at our hotels have led to success in landfill diversion, environmentally aware purchasing practices, and methods that reduce water consumption and the amount of chemicals used in our laundries.”
- 3 MAKE ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY AND STEWARDSHIP PART OF YOUR BRAND.** “We don’t do it for marketing; we just think it’s the right way to operate a business. Still, we have been really excited about some of the recognition we’ve received.”

WISE WORDS

At the first ever ALIS Women’s Networking Breakfast, industry leaders offered advice for women trying to move to the next level in hospitality.



“Create your impact. There will be people along the way who will help support you, but it’s ultimately up to you. You control your own destiny. Do not wait for someone else to create a path for you.”

KRISSY GATHRIGHT
EVP & COO, Apple Hospitality REIT



“Know yourself. Know your strengths and weaknesses. Get feedback, and work hard to get that feedback. It is not an easy thing to have people give you feedback, and it’s not easy for people to give feedback, particularly when it’s constructive. It is so critical as you find your career path that you know where your strengths and weaknesses are.”

LEENY OBERG
EVP & CFO, Marriott International



“Build relationships. Attend conferences like this. Network not just with women, but men as well. I also just believe that you can’t achieve success on your own. Make sure you’re working with successful people, positive people.”

JAGRUTI PANWALA
Owner & President, Wealth Protection Strategies, Treasurer, AAHOA