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THE POWER OF PREFERENCE

HOW PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS GIVES LOYALTY MEMBERS SOMETHING THEY CAN'T GET ANYWHERE ELSE.

By DEREK HERSCOVICI

Uniform benefits, opaque point calculations and cookie-cutter experiences have reduced the purpose of loyalty to an economic formula redolent of the complimentary airline snack.

Preferred Hotels & Resorts is trying something different.

Leaning into its reputation as one of the world's largest independent hotel brands, members of its I Prefer loyalty program can redeem their points at hundreds of distinctive hotels, resorts and residences around the world.

Designed for transparency and affordability, the program also connects more than six

million global members with new properties and hidden gems, driving occupancy as well as delivering authentic, individualized stays.

“What truly sets I Prefer Hotel Rewards apart is that we were built for independent hotels and the travelers who love them,” said Jennifer Munro, VP of global loyalty at Preferred Travel Group. “I Prefer offers authentic and unique experiences around the world, while still meeting expectations for recognition and personalization. Members begin seeing meaningful benefits from the moment they sign up—not after dozens of nights—which is increasingly



important in today's loyalty landscape.”

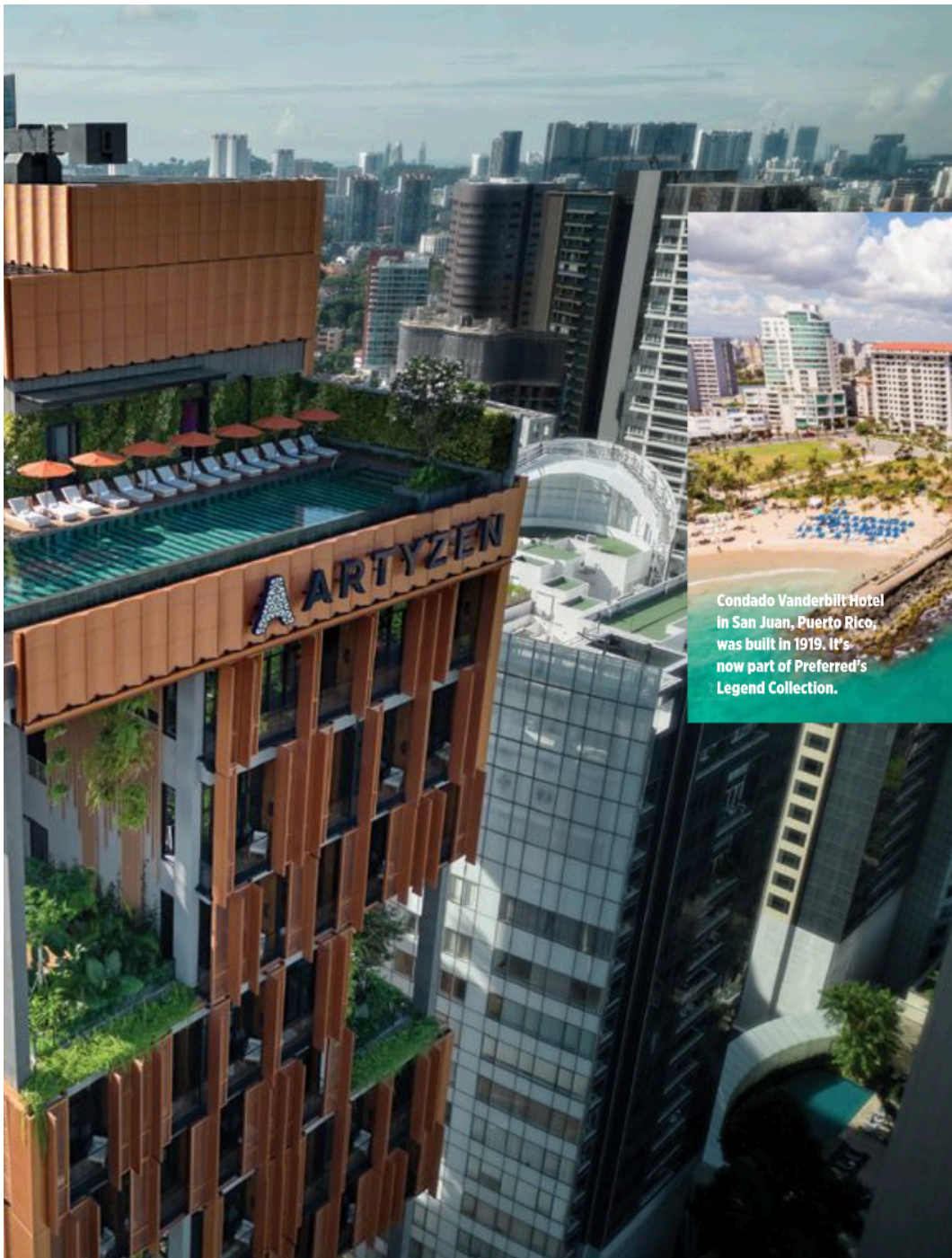
CHANGE IN STRATEGY

Over the last four years, Preferred Hotels & Resorts has evolved its benefits as a strategy to not only reward current members, but to drive demand to its legion of global properties.

Viewed as an asset for both travelers and hotel



Jennifer Munro, VP of global loyalty at Preferred Travel Group



Condado Vanderbilt Hotel in San Juan, Puerto Rico, was built in 1919. It's now part of Preferred's Legend Collection.

operators, the brand upgraded its offerings and improved communications to build awareness of the unique opportunities that only I Prefer provides. Since this recalibration, Preferred has seen a substantial growth in both membership and hotel participation and now extends to more than 700 hotels across 80 countries.

“As traveler expectations continue to rise, loyalty is no longer an option for independents,” said Munro. “High-value guests increasingly expect recognition, personalization and meaningful rewards, with loyalty shifting from transactional perks to emotional connection and curated experiences.”

According to Preferred Hotels & Resorts’ 2025 Luxury Travel Report, conducted with affluent U.S. travelers by The Harris Poll, 82% of respondents said loyalty programs were important to ensuring hotel quality, with nearly two-thirds agreeing a great past stay drives repeat bookings.

The look and feel of a property matters, too. The

same poll surveyed affluent Gen Z and Millennial travelers: Seventy-seven percent stated they had experienced “destination disillusionment,” and 79% agreed with the statement, “Modern luxury hotels have sacrificed soul for standardization.”

In many ways, older travelers and younger ones are kindred spirits: Both crave high-end experiences that feel unique to them and not of the cookie-cutter variety. Though hard brands of the past—and still some, today—were created with conformity in mind, independent properties under Preferred Hotels & Resorts’ aegis are positioned to deliver the kind of immersive experience the data and anecdotes from its study suggests is in great demand.

ACHIEVABLE ASPIRATIONS

Points in the I Prefer program are intended to be accrued and



used right away, with 10 points earned for every \$1 spent.

Its tiers—Silver (0-24,999 points), Gold (25,000-49,000 points) and Titanium (50k+ points)—are based on an award chart rather than dynamic pricing to provide both transparency and consistent point value.

At the moment, points can only be earned through eligible room stays, but Preferred is cultivating partnerships with Citibank and Capital One that would enable cardholders to exchange points into I Prefer membership benefits.

Enabling choice rather than mandating rigid redemption rules offers members the

flexibility to choose when and how they use their points. This can range from free nights, cash-and-points bookings or on-property redemptions.

I Prefer also offers a “private rates” program where members can access especially valuable hotel rates with a small number of points, one of the many ways the brand promotes visibility to its independent properties.

UNCOVERING THE DIFFERENCE

“Discoverability is a particular challenge for independently branded hotels,” said Munro. “Through our hotel network, we’ve been able to build a database of luxury travelers

with ‘permission to contact’—hotels would never be able to aggregate and communicate with that kind of audience on their own—[so] being part of I Prefer puts them in front of millions of travelers in these hotels’ demographic.”

This internal promotion is ideal for introducing newly added properties, such as Tumbling River Ranch in Colorado’s Pike National Forest; NANNAI Muro Alto on Brazil’s Pernambuco coastline; or ENVI Paje, a beachfront wellness lodge in Tanzania, opening June 2026.

Spanning both established luxury markets and emerging destinations, each property’s

unique personality is manifested through welcome amenities unique to the terroir of the property.

Loyalty also drives demand and repeat stays across the broader Preferred Travel Group network, with member rates consistently ranking among the top-performing revenue drivers, said Munro.

“Nearly half of I Prefer stays at hotels come from members that joined somewhere else in the network, meaning members are actively exploring different hotels across the portfolio,” said Munro. “It’s a clear indicator of loyalty-driven discovery and network effect.” 