



THIS WEEK, PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS' EXECUTIVE VP FOR ASIA PACIFIC ENCOURAGED US TO SEIZE NEW OPPORTUNITIES, SO WE'RE TAKING THAT AS A SIGN WE SHOULD HAVE OUR FIFTH COFFEE FOR THE DAY, GUILT-FREE.

What's your main goal for this year?

Connecting with people. I was fortunate enough to be able to travel home over the holidays to see family I hadn't had contact with in over two years. It reminded me that there is just no substitute for in-person contact.

When Australia announced the opening of its borders, I immediately booked a trip from Singapore to meet with colleagues and hoteliers. There are many more trips that will be arranged in the coming weeks also.

<https://www.travelweekly.com.au/article/midweek-interview-with-preferred-hotels-resorts-jonathan-newbury/>

What's your favourite thing about working in the travel industry?

It's not boring! I once worked for a pharmaceutical company and found it dreadfully dull. Every day is a challenge in this industry – and it attracts like-minded people.

How do you like to spend your free time?

I have two children and a dog – what spare time?! Seriously though, I like to keep fit and I coach my son's rugby team.

Outside of that, as you would expect from a hotelier, I have a keen passion for food, cocktails and wine.

Have you managed to do any travelling since restrictions began to ease (domestic or international)?

In addition to my multi-destination trip to see family in Chicago and Wales over Christmas, I was lucky enough to travel to Boston for our annual conference in November 2021.

Just recently I returned from a meeting in Hawaii too – that may sound glamorous but it was 34 hours of door-to-door travel.

Due to prevailing travel restrictions, I couldn't fly via Japan, so to return home I had to fly via Vancouver! We are currently planning a family trip to Thailand for April and I have several other business trips in the pipeline to meet with colleagues and clients as borders re-open.

What's your favourite travel company, besides the one you work for?

There are a few boutique hotel brands such as The Fullerton Hotels & Resorts that consistently deliver a superlative product and service. That's not an easy feat in recent years.

I have a keen interest in companies that are rising to the challenge of the climate crisis, especially as it impacts the travel industry, so it was particularly satisfying when our company launched Beyond Green, a sustainable hotel brand that currently includes 30 of the world's best eco-lodges and resorts.

Pachama is a great company that helps brands become carbon neutral or even negative by selling true Carbon Credits to offset carbon footprints.

If you could invite three famous guests (dead or alive) to a dinner party, who would you choose?

Hmmm...this is difficult. My mind automatically goes to friends around the world whose company I enjoy. Unfortunately, none of them are famous!

It's tempting to answer this question with obvious answers: Ghandi, Nelson Mandela etc., but this is a dinner party and I want it to be fun, so I am more likely to invite comedians such as Larry David, Ricky Gervais, and Jim Jefferies!

What's something positive you've witnessed or experienced since the global pandemic hit?

The tenacity and humanity with which we as a company and our hoteliers, together and individually, have handled the sudden and sweeping change.

This is certainly not the case for all hotel companies out there. Some companies were far less accommodating or careful with their decisions, so I am particularly proud of the way Preferred responded and doubled down on investment in our people.

What's your advice for others in the travel industry on coping with the global pandemic?

Patience. This is a 3-5 year event so we are by no means out of the woods yet. Patience is key, but it is also important to embrace change, stay alert, and seize new opportunities whenever possible.

What book and/or TV show can you not get enough of lately?

There is so much good TV lately. The new season of *Ozark* currently has me entertained on Netflix, but I also recently binge-watched *White Lotus* on a long-haul flight. It is brilliantly done.

For books, I just finished reading *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* by Yuval Noah Harari. It's a fascinating and long term view on the evolution of humanity and how it defines us in the present.

I also recently read a business book called *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*, which is proving incredibly useful for keeping focused on the important goals for 2022.

Do you have any travel goals for 2022?

I relocated to Asia at the height of the pandemic and haven't had much chance to travel around the region since.

As a result, my travel goals are numerous: skiing in Japan, relaxing on a beach in Thailand, seeing the historical sights of Cambodia, and visiting the metropolises of Vietnam.

Let's see how many of them I get to tick off this year!