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HOTELS

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STERNLICHT BRANDING AGAIN

STARWOOD DEBUTS TRIBUTE

STEIGENBERGER'S EXPANDING VIEW

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WHAT'S HOT

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Hoteliers are constantly on the lookout for all things “hot,” so each year we devote this issue to highlighting what we see as the hottest trends in design, F&B and technology — in addition to some of the most noteworthy individuals in the industry. From people making hot deals to “daylife” design, experience-centric dining and keyless check-in, the stories on the following pages are practically burning up.

People

AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS, INSPIRATION, CREATIVITY, NECESSITY, INTUITION AND LONGEVITY DRIVE PLANS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND NEW COMPETITION.

by JEFF WEINSTEIN, EDITOR IN CHIEF



● BARRY STERNLICHT

CHAIRMAN AND CEO, STARWOOD CAPITAL GROUP, GREENWICH, CONNECTICUT

While he wouldn't get into specifics and denied being a rumored investor in Amanresorts, Barry Sternlicht did admit he is preparing to launch another brand — likely in the budget or economy segment and assuredly different from the pack. He also plans to take public some 300 limited-service hotels in his portfolio — likely later this summer.

Starwood Capital Group is now a hotel developer with its new 1 and Baccarat brands managed by subsidiary SH Group. Of the two brands, Sternlicht says 1 has more legs, but he enjoys having both. "They are more fun than they are material to our enterprise or investors," Sternlicht admits. "But to me they are important because they are follow-ons to W. That's why I had to do a brand with a purpose in 1. I didn't want to do just another brand. They mean something. It's not your 75th boutique brand."

● ADAM ARON

INTERIM CEO, STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS WORLDWIDE, STAMFORD, CONNECTICUT

Adam Aron has two charges from the board: accelerate the pace of growth and drive top-line revenue while being more mindful of the costs. Starwood's new 4-star Tribute Portfolio brand should jumpstart growth and get the company into a more accessible soft-brand space to complement its Luxury Collection. Aron expects 100 Tributes within five years.

He also wants to sharpen revenue and profitability of the other nine brands with a special emphasis on Sheraton, which will launch a comprehensive marketing plan. Details are expected to surface this month.

After meeting with 150 owners during his first seven weeks succeeding Frits van Paasschen in the role, Aron adds, "In terms of meeting hotel owners' needs, it's very important for Starwood to demonstrate that it intends to be an agile, nimble, fast-moving hospitality operator that is interested in what our owners are interested in."





● MIKE DENOMA

CEO, GLH HOTELS MANAGEMENT, LONDON

With some 9,354 rooms across 39 hotels globally (more than 4,000 rooms in London) and three new lifestyle brands, GLH has set a lofty goal of becoming the best-managed hotel company in the world at the property level by 2019. And just at press time, GLH announced Thistle Express, a value play that will launch in London in 2016. The new brand will go to market as a stylish limited-service brand that highlights super-fast Wi-Fi.

Mike DeNoma is leading the charge by reinventing the company's structure and embedding a Value Centre management model in the hotels. "It's creating faster, better, local decision-making based on a cadre of 'Value Centre General Managers' in each hotel," he says.

DeNoma adds that GLH is transforming the guest experiences offered at the upscale Amba, Every and Clermont brands, including a hotel-led approach to direct customer connection/personalization, radical hosting, room-specific customer feedback and what he says is the world's fastest free Wi-Fi.

Over the next financial year, GLH — a subsidiary of Singapore's GuocoLeisure Limited — will complete its three-year transformation, and DeNoma says the company is starting to build partnerships beyond the current portfolio.

● IAN LIVINGSTONE

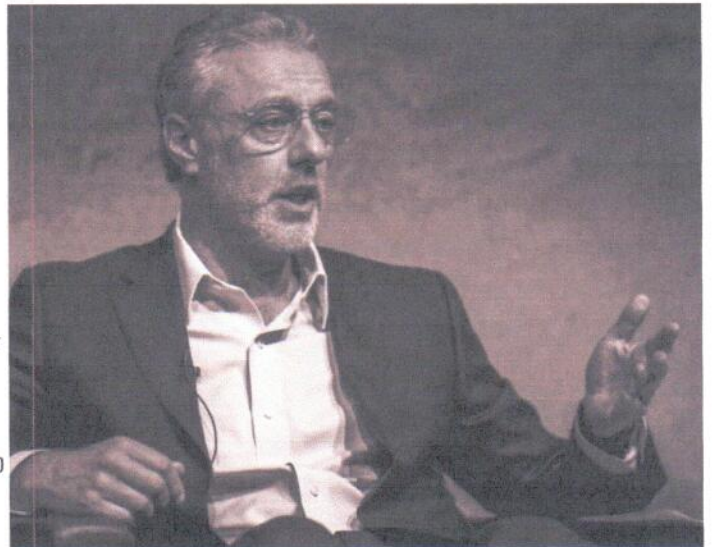
CO-FOUNDER, LONDON & REGIONAL PROPERTIES, LONDON

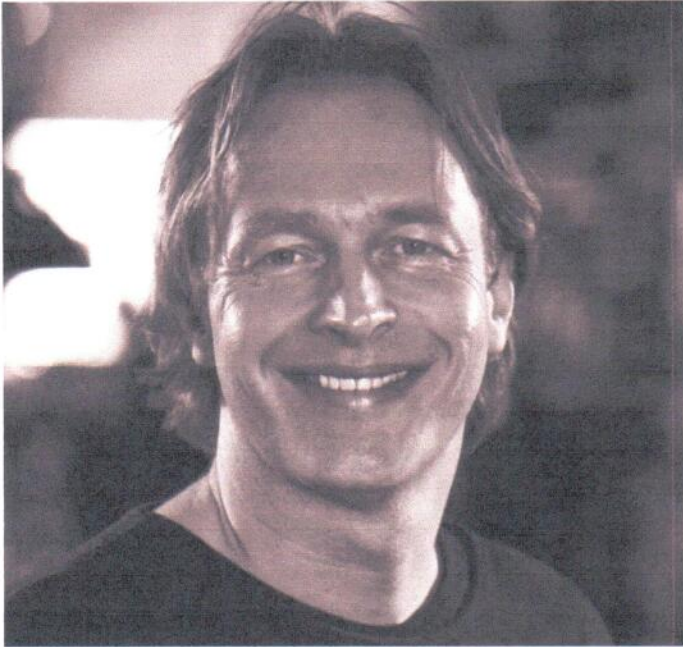
With brother Richard, Ian Livingstone continues to be the envy of U.K. hotel owners, having recently sold the former Four Seasons Dublin for €50 million (US\$74.5 million) after buying it in 2011 for €15 million (US\$22.4 million).

The brothers are in the process of a US\$10 billion reconstruction of Panama's Howard Air Base and also invest in futuristic tree houses at Chewton Glen in the United Kingdom.

Ian says he wants to acquire another jewel to go along with Chewton Glen and Cliveden, and then maybe refurbish some of their London assets.

Ian adds that the Howard Air force base, now called Panama Pacifico, is expected to deliver around 800 to 900 homes per annum for the foreseeable future and eventually will house 40,000 to 50,000 residents. L&R currently has 230 companies working at Panama Pacifico, employing 7,500 full-time workers. This will increase to around 20,000 by completion.





● HANS MEYER

CO-FOUNDER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR, ZOKU, AMSTERDAM

After helping launch CitizenM, Hans Meyer has just launched an extended-stay loft hybrid called Zoku (Japanese for family, tribe or clan). The first Zoku, featuring 133 lofts designed by architectural and design firm Concrete, is expected to open in Amsterdam this fall. With co-founder Marc Jongerius, Meyer wants to roll out the brand in cities such as London, Paris and Berlin, among others.

Zoku's lofts concept focuses on spaces for living and working. The central feature of the guestroom is a four-person table that can be used to work, dine and entertain. Interiors are customizable and feature an elevated loft-style sleeping space accessed by a retractable staircase, a lounge area, a kitchen, an alcove desk and cleverly designed storage space. The minimum area for a unit is just 25 square meters (269 square feet).

"We've worked closely with our target audience — the professional Millennial traveler — during the entire development cycle to create an innovative business model reflecting guest-centric design, smart use of space and new adaptive technologies," Meyer says.

● SÉBASTIEN BAZIN

CHAIRMAN AND CEO, ACCOR, PARIS

Sébastien Bazin has been delivering improved performance in his first year as Accor's corporate leader, but it's his moves to shake up the status quo that have caught everyone's attention.

He split op-co from prop-co, launched a new digital ecosystem with a €225 million (US\$241 million) investment, acquired the trending Mama Shelter lifestyle brand, signed a long-term alliance with Huazhu (China Lodging) and generally put a new face on a company traditionally known for its plodding budget brands and slow-developing upscale portfolio.

Perhaps most noteworthy is Bazin's desire to drive more bookings through Accor's own channels by acquiring the likes of Fastbooking and Wipolo. "There is no reason in the world why we should be leaving Trivago, Kayak, TripAdvisor and Airbnb to be the only guys inventing new services, new product," Bazin says. "Our hotel company has the ability to do it, but there has to be a dedicated team, dedicated talent and a dedicated initiative."





● BOB EAST

CEO, MANTRA GROUP, SURFERS PARADISE, AUSTRALIA

Mantra Group, led by CEO Bob East, continues to strengthen its platforms. The company has performed strongly in terms of revenue, profitability and cash flow and has a solid pipeline in its Pacific region, aided by its April agreement to acquire Outrigger Hotels & Resorts Australia for A\$29.5 million (US\$22.8 million), which includes four resorts (984 keys) located in some of Australia's key holiday destinations.

As a result of the acquisition, Mantra Group — with close to 120 hotels under brands Peppers, Mantra and BreakFree — launched a fully underwritten institutional placement to raise approximately A\$50 million (US\$38.6 million) to assist in funding the acquisition as well as provide capital to fund identified pipeline opportunities.

"This acquisition is complementary to our existing portfolio, and, together with future pipeline growth initiatives, is expected to supplement Mantra Group's strong organic growth with incremental earnings," East says.

● ROBERT WARMAN

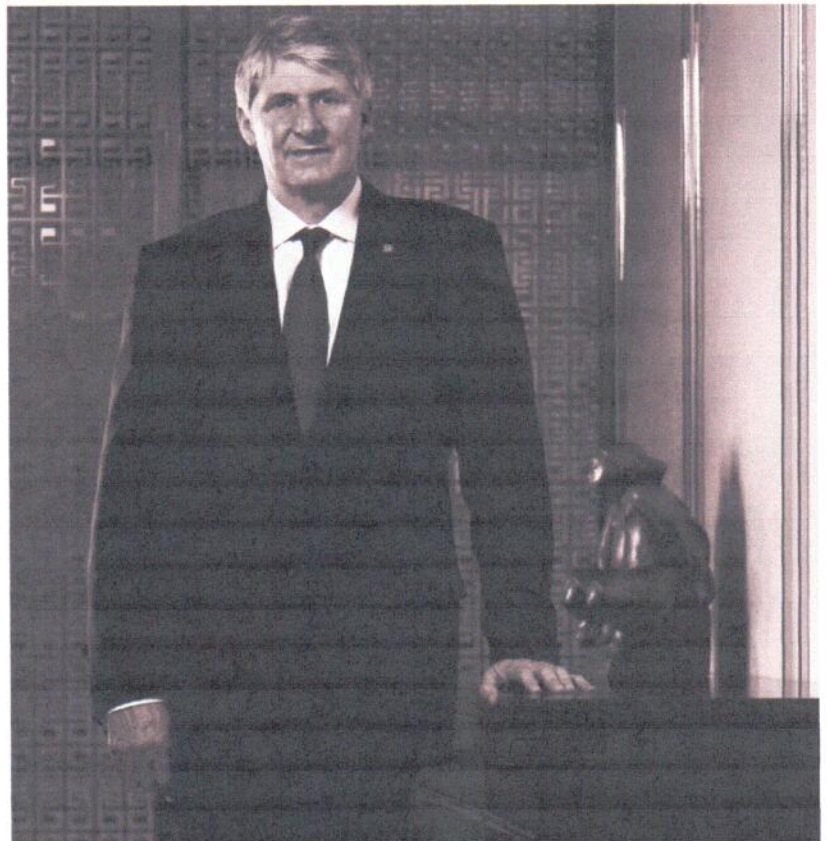
CEO, LANGHAM HOSPITALITY GROUP, HONG KONG

Robert Warman is not shy about stating that Langham's goal to grow from 20-plus hotels to 500 hotels in the next 10 years isn't aiming for the impossible. That growth could come through acquisition, and it will be helped by the development of Langham's recently announced upscale Cordis Hotels and Resorts brand.

Cordis — with core pillars focused on intuitive service, connectivity, sophistication and a sense of community — will be developed through a combination of new-build and conversion projects in key cities in Asia and North America, with the first hotel now open in Hong Kong.

Cordis has signed management agreements and letters of intent to open eight hotels in seven cities within the next three years, expects to develop 25 over four to five years and does not rule out a portfolio acquisition.

But the hottest thing in Warman's inbox in April was the signed management agreement for a Langham Place resort in Bali. "This is a milestone as it will be the first resort in Asia for our Langham Hotels & Resorts brand, with more signings anticipated in the region soon," he says.



● **HAMAD ABDULLA AL-MULLA**

CEO AND BOARD MEMBER, KATARA HOSPITALITY, DOHA, QATAR

Since he took the helm at Katara Hospitality in 2011, Hamad Abdulla Al-Mulla and his team have expanded their global operations from one hotel in Egypt to a global portfolio. "We are continuing to actively invest in and develop iconic properties around the world and have recently crossed our target of 30 properties by 2016 a full two years ahead of schedule," Al-Mulla says.

Preferring the iconic, most recently Katara celebrated the opening of the Peninsula in Paris — not long after acquiring a 50% stake in The Savoy, London. Al-Mulla also led an initiative last June to acquire five InterContinental-branded properties in key European cities.

"I am also pleased that Katara Hospitality plays such an important role in developing the local hospitality landscape in Qatar," Al-Mulla adds. "We welcome any initiative which helps to further enhance our country's tourism infrastructure and appeal."



● **LINDSEY UEBERROTH**

PRESIDENT AND CEO, PREFERRED HOTELS & RESORTS, CHICAGO

On March 4, Lindsey Ueberroth launched Preferred's rebranding efforts to clarify and simplify its brand purpose and message.

All of Preferred's 650 member hotels and resorts are represented by the Preferred Hotels & Resorts brand. Additionally, each property has been aligned with one of its five new collections — Legend, LVX, Lifestyle, Connect and Preferred Residences — which aims to offer a more intuitive way for consumers to search and book.

Named CEO in early 2014, Ueberroth says today her goal is to "leverage Preferred's close to 50 years of heritage in the independent hotel space to create clarity and fuel loyalty for the independent hotel experience for the next 50 years to come."

Next for Ueberroth is leading the launch of a new ad campaign that includes using real photos from customers submitted over social media. "I want Preferred to be looked at as a brand that means something to consumers," she says.

● **DAVID BERG**

CEO, CARLSON, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

In the hot seat at Carlson since May 1, Berg has the tall order of growing new brands Radisson Red and Quorvus Collection as well as the existing Radisson Blu and refashioned Country Inns & Suites concepts.

Carlson wants to open 60 Radisson Red hotels globally and grow Country Inns & Suites to 600 hotels by 2020. Carlson is also looking for key gateways for its upscale Blu brand and is now prepared to franchise the concept.

Berg also says he wants to create 360-degree personalized branded experiences that transform customer behavior, foster loyalty and drive meaningful returns on the digital investments made. "Targeting key customer segments, delivering customer-personalized content and meeting customer choice of channels in addition to delivering ROIs are all critical considerations regarding the future of digital investment opportunities," he says.



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