



HOTELMANAGEMENT.NET

HOTEL MANAGEMENT

THE LEADING HOSPITALITY NEWS AUTHORITY SINCE 1875 | Vol. 231, No. 15 | November 2016

33

GMs TO WATCH

OUR ANNUAL LIST OF ENTERPRISING LEADERS

TAKING LEAVE

How hotel companies are taking better care of their employees' needs

5 F&B TRENDS & FADS



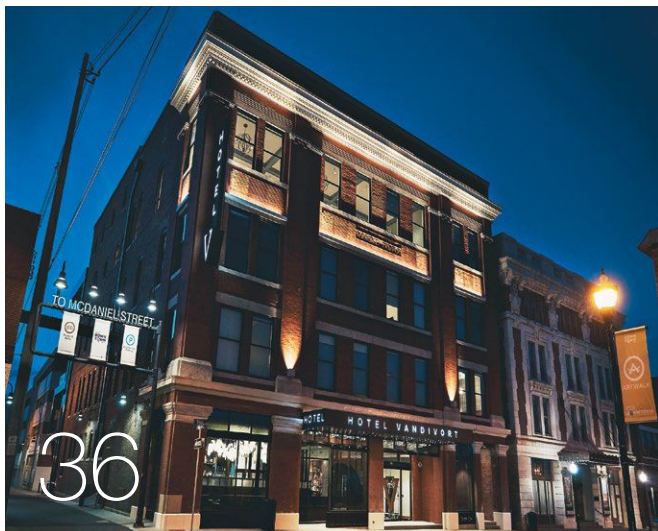
ONE-ON-ONE WITH OHM COLLECTION'S DANIEL HOSTETTLER

This president and managing director was practically reared to one day lead a luxury hotel group. Now, with one of the pre-eminent resorts in the U.S. under his charge, he navigates the course ahead: ready should choppy waters come, but intent on cutting a path toward growth.



ONLINE EXTRA: FOR MORE PROFILES, VISIT HOTELMANAGEMENT.NET

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



36



54

DEPARTMENTS

ONE-ON-ONE

34 | Daniel Hostettler

The OHM Collection president and managing director explains why old is the new new

GM LOOK

36 | James “JP” Roberts

The GM of the Hotel Vandivort in Springfield, Mo., talks a life of hospitality and a Midwestern return

SPECIAL REPORT

38 | GMs to Watch

These GMs are some of the heroes found across the hospitality industry

TECHNOLOGY

54 | PMS

Operators want to have full control of their property at all times, and vendors are stepping up

OPERATIONS

56 | Scents and Sounds

Sensory design in hospitality is big and getting bigger, and hotels are only limited by their creativity

FOOD & BEVERAGE

57 | Banquets and Catering

The F&B revolution is doing wonders for banquet services, which will never be the same

DESIGN

58 | Office and Task Furniture

This is the generation of working alone together, leading to an evolution of public spaces

PROCURE

60 | Uniforms

The designers behind high fashion are stepping into the realm of hospitality

HOT OPENING

62 | Four Points by Sheraton Havana

Starwood makes history as it brings its Four Points brand into Cuba



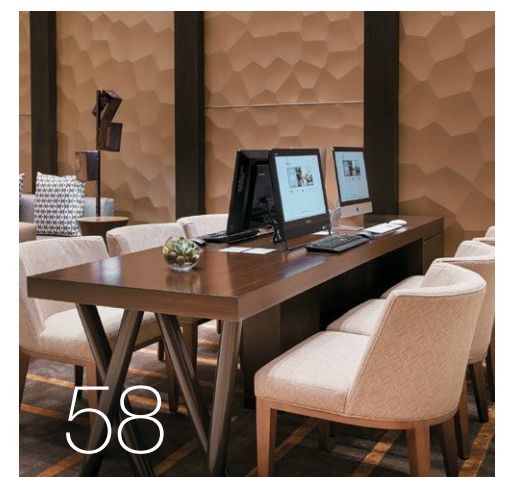
56



57



62



58

Ocean House's DANIEL HOSTETTLER



BY DAVID EISEN
@DAVIDEISEN3

Few sites on the East Coast inspire as much wonderment as Ocean House, in Watch Hill, R.I. In an alt-hospitality universe, where design is lifestyle minded and millennials rule the roost, Ocean House is a traditionalist: time-honored luxury not easily swayed by the trends of the day.

That's not to say it's operating with blinders on. While guests that include Conan O'Brien and Joe Scarborough come for the bygone, beach feel, the hotel, and the group it's part of, OHM Collection, is being shepherded to be as relevant now as when the hotel first opened in 1868.

Making sure of that is Daniel Hostettler, president and managing director of OHM Collection, which includes three other hotels outside of Ocean House—Rhode Island's Weekapaug Inn and Watch Hill Inn, the latter just down the street from Ocean House, and Spicer Mansion, in Mystic, Conn.

Hostettler running a luxury hotel collection makes perfect sense on account of his upbringing. As a child, he spent many summers in Switzerland, a country known for producing some of the finest practitioners of luxury hospitality. "Being exposed to airports, hotels and restaurants, I got a fascination for how these big, beautiful,

grand hotels operate," he said, foreshadowing his future career.

Hostettler was struck by how many of the grand hotels of Switzerland—Baur au Lac, The Dolder Grand—had to constantly reinvent themselves through the years. A constant progression not unlike what Hostettler faced at Ocean House.

A NEW BEGINNING

After Rhode Island fire codes were reassessed in the wake of The Station nightclub's tragic fire in 2003 that claimed the lives of 100 people, Ocean House, after years of neglect, was deemed noncompliant with building codes. To the rescue came mutual fund manager Charles Royce, who purchased the property and promptly razed it to make way for a new \$150-million, all-cash hotel, albeit one that was a facsimile of its old self, down to the positioning of the floor planks in the lobby. "It was always fascinating to me how these older hotels could be reinvented, sort of like what we've done here," Hostettler said.

His earliest taste of hospitality came during a high school catering internship, prompting him to seek a career in the business. His idea was to return to Switzerland and study at the famed Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, until he found out that fluency in French was a prerequisite. Instead, Hostettler went to the Mile High City and the University of Denver, then onto post-graduate studies at Cornell University. A lifelong learner, earlier this year, Hostettler received a Certificate of Professional Development from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. "I believe that when you start thinking you know it all, you should probably retire," Hostettler said.

He's not trading in his Relais & Châteaux lapel pin any time soon. (Ocean House is part of the exclusive group and is also one of only eight Forbes triple five-star hotels in the world.) Hostettler's current success is attributable to his work ethic: he's a doer, not a loafer. On busy Saturday nights at Ocean House's Seasons restaurant, you'll find Hostettler playing the role of line runner, plating dishes and assisting cooks. "I like to get my hands dirty—that's the fun part," he said. But it also drives home a point. "At the luxury level, you're in the business of getting all the details right, and I'm a details guy. Guests appreciate that much more than being charmed."

Hostettler's work ethic could be traced back to his biggest mentor, a paragon in the world of luxury hospitality:

Ali Kasikci. Kasikci has held jobs with such brands as Peninsula, Montage Hotels and Belmond, and Hostettler worked under Kasikci at The Peninsula Beverly Hills. He alludes to him with preternatural deference. "When he walked into a restaurant, it was like he had eyes in the back of his head," Hostettler said. "He instilled in me how important it was to be on the floor and to be with the guests, to see all of the detail."

Being detail oriented is a luxury Hostettler is able to have, in part, because of the scale of the operation—four hotels that are all in relative close proximity. OHM is not a large global chain, and that's how Hostettler runs it.

"At the very luxury end of the spectrum, you don't operate to the [profit and loss] like a lot of these larger chains do," he said. "We operate to the guest and their feedback. We expect that, then, when we give great service, we can charge the kind of rates we charge and it's going to drop down to the bottom line. It does."

OLD IS THE NEW NEW

Just because OHM provides what could be described as old-school luxury doesn't mean it's being delivered in an antiquated manner. Guests will find Apple TV in rooms, bandwidth is strong and websites are fully optimized: 45-second videos of all 18 Ocean House signature suites figure prominently on the hotel's website, while for other rooms, 360-degree tours are available.

All of the work has allowed the company to tap into a much younger guest. "We're finding that the millennial traveler really wants to know what they're getting," Hostettler said.

With all the success, time will tell if the collection is expanded upon, and if it is, most likely it would be in New England. "I'm a control freak," Hostettler jokingly said, adding they were looking at a potential hotel in Washington, Conn., and another in Rhode Island.

For 2017, controlling costs will be top of mind for Hostettler, a difficulty when running luxury hotels that demand high levels of service. To that end, Hostettler is prepared. "Every year, we go through the exercise of 'What would we do if business suddenly fell off by 20 percent?' Where would we cut without the guests feeling it?" Hostettler said. (Rates at Ocean House are steadily above \$1,500 per night in high season.)

"My takeaway from 2008 was that a lot of hotels went into that without preparation and those that survived best were the ones who adapted quickly. We believe that any good hotel management company should have a plan for the downturn."

In the case of OHM and Hostettler, business continues on the up and up. **HM**



Ocean House, in Watch Hill, R.I., was razed, rebuilt and reopened in its current form in 2010.



OHM COLLECTION

Headquarters: Rhode Island

Structure: Ownership and management

Portfolio: Ocean House, Weekapaug Inn, Watch Hill Inn, Spicer Mansion

Website: www.ohmcollection.com