38TH ANNUAL NYU
INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE
JUNE 5–7, 2016 New York Marriott Marquis • NYC

Conference Chair
JONATHAN M. TISCH
Co-Chairman of the Board and Office of the President, Loews Corporation;
Chairman, Loews Hotels & Resorts

Conference Host
DENNIS DI LORENZO
Harvey J. Stedman Dean
NYU School of Professional Studies

GENERAL SESSION & WORKSHOP SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
AS OF JUNE 2, 2016

TISCH CENTER FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM
sps.nyu.edu/hospitalityconference
JONATHAN M. TISCH
CO-CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD AND OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, LOEWS CORPORATION; CHAIRMAN, LOEWS HOTELS & RESORTS

Jonathan M. Tisch is co-chairman of the board and a member of the office of the president of Loews Corporation, one of the largest diversified financial holding companies in the US, and is chairman of its subsidiary, Loews Hotels & Resorts.

During his tenure as CEO, Tisch engineered the company's expansion and emergence as a leading luxury hotel brand by infusing the properties with a widely praised corporate culture that places a high value on partnerships that empower employees, satisfy customers, contribute to communities, and improve the bottom line.

Believing you can do well and good at the same time, Tisch is a champion of corporate responsibility and active citizenship. He initiated the Loews Hotels Good Neighbor Policy, a recipient of the US President’s Service Award, 25 years ago. He is the naming benefactor of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University, where he also is vice chair of the board of trustees.

Tisch is the author of three bestselling books: The Power of We: Succeeding Through Partnerships; Chocolates on the Pillow Aren’t Enough: Reinventing the Customer Experience; and Citizen You: Doing Your Part to Change the World. He hosted the Emmy-nominated and Gracie Award-winning television series, Beyond the Boardroom with Jonathan Tisch, where he spoke with some of America’s most preeminent business luminaries.

Nationally recognized as a leader in the multibillion dollar travel and tourism industry, he founded and served as chairman of the Travel Business Roundtable, and now serves as chairman emeritus of the United States Travel Association. Tisch is committed to a vibrant tourism industry in New York City, where for nearly six years he served as chairman of NYC & Company. In recognition of his leadership, Crain’s New York Business named him one of the inaugural members of its Hall of Fame, which recognizes individuals who have transformed New York City in both their professional work and in their civic and philanthropic activities. Crain’s had previously named Tisch one of the “Top 10 Most Influential Business Leaders.”

Tisch is a co-owner of the New York Football Giants and was instrumental in bringing the 2014 Super Bowl to the metropolitan area. He served as co-chair of the NY/NJ Super Bowl Host Committee. This is Tisch’s 22nd year as conference chair.
Following an extensive national search, Dennis Di Lorenzo was named dean of the NYU School of Professional Studies (NYUSPS) in September 2013. One year later, his deanship was named in honor of Harvey J. Stedman, a predecessor in that role. Having served as interim and vice dean of NYUSPS, in addition to holding other senior-level positions for nearly 20 years, Dean Di Lorenzo has an in-depth understanding of the School that few can claim. This knowledge is eclipsed only by his enthusiastic passion for and palpable dedication to the School, as evidenced by the key leadership role he has played in its evolution and growth. Dean Di Lorenzo has, among many other initiatives, fostered the development of innovative programming; provided insight and guidance on faculty and student affairs issues; expanded the School’s horizons in the US and abroad; and overseen the renovation of 7 East 12th Street, the flagship home for the NYU School of Professional Studies.

The NYU School of Professional Studies serves as the NYU home for study and applied research pertaining to those knowledge-based industries in which the New York region leads globally. Given the current emphasis to bridge the gap between an individual’s practical learning needs and the requirements of industry, the School’s 82-year history and mission in this arena are proving to be of even greater application and import today. The School continues to investigate, implement, and nurture programs that elucidate professional requirements and industry trends to prepare the leaders of the future.

During his tenure, the dean has cultivated unprecedented and frequent open dialogue with students, faculty members, and administrators. The School is committed to building community and to improving student experience and outcomes—goals that remain consistently at the top of his agenda. These objectives have motivated Dean Di Lorenzo to implement several important initiatives. The International Student Support Center (ISSC) was created to serve a diverse and growing international student population. It offers programs and services to ease the transition for international students—academically and socially—as they adapt to a new culture and learning environment. The NYU Wasserman Center for Career Development at NYUSPS was launched in Fall 2012 to support the career development of the School’s graduate and undergraduate students.

Consistent with the NYU mission of expanding its global network to prepare students for lives and careers in a diverse world, the School opened the NYUSPS American Language Institute Tokyo Center in 2014, and recently launched the NYUSPS American Language Institute at NYU Shanghai. The dean is developing additional initiatives that will continue to bring the School’s brand of education to locations around the world—enterprises that will respect and accommodate the cultures of the countries with which the School engages. Spearheading the charge for professional education here and abroad, the NYU School of Professional Studies continues to investigate, implement, and nurture programs that elucidate professional requirements and industry trends to prepare the leaders of the future.

In addition to his role at NYUSPS, for the last 10 years, Dean Di Lorenzo also has been acting in a public service capacity, building consensus and creating public policy, as a trustee member of the Harrison, New York Board of Education, which serves a multicultural, pre-K through 12th-grade student population. He and his wife Jennifer are the proud parents of four children: Julia; Dennis, Jr.; Jack; and Violet.
DOROTHY A. JENNINGS
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
HVS

Dorothy A. Jennings is executive vice president of HVS, where she is involved in the administration of the New York office of the renowned hotel consulting organization. HVS operates globally from offices throughout the world, and provides a wide variety of hotel feasibility, appraisal, and financial services specializing exclusively in the lodging industry. HVS provides assistance in litigation support, management company selection, contract negotiation, and asset management. She serves on the HVS board of directors as an ex-officio member.

Prior to joining HVS, Jennings was vice president of InterBank/Brener Brokerage Services, as well as Stephen W. Brener Associates, where she served as vice president, brokerage department. Jennings is a member of the board of directors of the Belleayre Conservatory, which promotes cultural activities at Belleayre Mountain and is a vital resource of the Catskill Mountain region. She also is a member of the board of the Shandaken Animal Shelter where she has served as a volunteer for over 20 years.

Jennings began her real estate career as manager of the hospitality division of Helmsley-Spear, and served as executive assistant to Stephen W. Brener, founder of the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference. She has been involved as conference coordinator of this premier event since its inception 38 years ago. In this role, she is responsible for the coordination of patron and sponsor support that provides academic initiatives and scholarships for students of the NYU School of Professional Studies Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism. Jennings is a member of the executive planning committee for the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference. In conjunction with the committee, Jennings plays a vital part in the development of the conference program.

In 2012, Jennings was recognized by the NYU School of Professional Studies when a room was named in her honor in the new NYU School of Professional Studies building, acknowledging her tireless efforts to further the mission of the Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism.
ARTHUR ADLER
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER—AMERICAS JLL

Arthur Adler, managing director and chief executive officer—Americas, heads the Americas division of Jones Lang LaSalle’s global hotels & hospitality group. Adler oversees a business that consists of over 115 people located throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, and South America that arranged over $12 billion in lodging industry investment sales, debt, and equity transactions during 2015. In addition, JLL’s hotels and hospitality group provides a broad array of consulting services, including valuation, asset management, acquisition due diligence, tax appeals, and strategic planning for hotel owners, investors, lenders, multinational brands, and operating companies.

Previously, Adler was managing director of the lodging and leisure group at Sonnenblick-Goldman Company. During his diverse career, he has been a partner at Coopers & Lybrand in the hospitality consulting group, a senior principal at Laventhol & Horwath, and an operations analyst for Hilton Hotels.

GLENN ALBA
MANAGING DIRECTOR BLACKSTONE

Glenn Alba is a managing director of Blackstone’s real estate group based in New York, where he oversees asset management for hospitality investments in the Americas. Blackstone is one of the largest single owners of hospitality assets and companies worldwide, with ownership interests in Hilton Worldwide, La Quinta, Extended Stay America, and Motel 6. Alba has direct oversight responsibility for Blackstone’s hotel ownership interests in the Americas, which consist of more than 225 hotels with value in excess of $17 billion, in segments ranging from luxury to midscale, and across nearly all major hotel brands. Current holdings include such iconic assets as the Boca Raton Resort & Club, The Cosmopolitan, and El Conquistador. He also serves as a board member for La Quinta and Motel 6.

Alba joined Blackstone in 1997 and has been involved in the asset management of a broad range of investments in the United States and Europe, including office, hotel, multifamily, and industrial assets. He was based in the London office from 2001 to 2004. Since returning to the United States in 2005, Alba has been primarily involved in the hospitality sector and oversees other global portfolio management responsibilities. He currently serves as a member of the Villanova University President’s Advisory Council and Real Estate Advisory Council, the Doubletree Hotel Owner’s Advisory Council, and the Hospitality Asset Managers Association (HAMA).

CHRISTOPHE ALAUX
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, NORTH AMERICA, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN (NCAC) ACCORHOTELS

Christophe Alaux is the chief executive officer HotelServices of North America, Central America, and the Caribbean (NCAC) for AccorHotels. In this role, his primary objectives include identifying and pursuing potential growth opportunities in the NCAC region. Alaux is dedicated to the overall success of the region across all disciplines while offering new perspectives to further expand upon existing strategies.

Alaux joined AccorHotels in 2008 as chief operating officer of hospitality for France. In 2013, he joined the executive committee as CEO HotelServices for France while also being responsible for overseeing the Mercure and MGallery brands throughout Europe.

Prior to joining AccorHotels, Alaux held various executive positions at the French multinational retailer Carrefour, including serving as a member of the executive committee as vice president of organization, systems, and supply chain, as well as chief operating officer of Carrefour in Shanghai and Zhejiang provinces. He also has held executive positions at Accenture, a global management consulting company, and at the car manufacturer PSA Peugeot Citroën. Alaux is a graduate of the Paris Institute of Political Sciences and the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School.

STEVEN ANGEL
PRINCIPAL FULCRUM HOSPITALITY

Steven Angel is a founding principal of Fulcrum Hospitality, a boutique institutional operating partner that also provides transaction advisory and asset management services to the hotel and gaming industries. Prior to forming Fulcrum, Angel was a managing director at Goldman Sachs where his responsibilities included hotel and gaming acquisitions and asset management for a series of real estate opportunity funds sponsored by Goldman Sachs.

Angel’s industry experience spans over 25 years, first in hotel operations with brands such as Ritz-Carlton, then as a managing consultant with PricewaterhouseCoopers, and finally as a lodging equity research analyst for Lehman Brothers before joining Goldman Sachs in 2004. Angel earned a BS from Purdue University in restaurant hotel management and an MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.
CRAIG J. ANISZEWSKI
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER SUMMIT HOTEL PROPERTIES

Craig J. Aniszewski has served as executive vice president and chief operating officer of Summit Hotel Properties since the company’s IPO in February 2011. He joined The Summit Group in January 1997 as vice president of operations and development. He then became the executive vice president and chief operating officer of Summit Hotel Properties in 2007 and was a member of the board of managers of their predecessor company since 2004.

Aniszewski’s extensive experience in the hospitality industry provides the company unique advantages in oversight, efficiency, and profitability in the operations of the growing portfolio of hotels. Aniszewski joined The Summit Group following 13 years with Marriott International, where he held sales and operations positions in full-service convention and resort hotels. During his career with Marriott, he also worked in the select service sector, holding positions including the director of sales and general manager for Residence Inn and Courtyard branded hotels located in Florida, New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina.

Aniszewski graduated from the University of Dayton with a BS in criminal justice and minors in business and psychology.

TERENCE BADOUR
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, LAW AND ADMINISTRATION FRHI HOTEL & RESORTS

Terence Badour is the executive vice president, law and administration of FRHI Hotels & Resorts. He joined the company in 1998 as vice president, general counsel, and corporate secretary. FRHI Hotels & Resorts is a global lodging management company operating over 115 hotels and resorts under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel brands and manages branded residences, estates, and luxury private residence club properties.

Badour has more than 30 years of experience in the fields of corporate and securities law and mergers and acquisitions. He is a member of the Canadian Bar Association, the general counsel committee of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, the council of senior legal executives of The Conference Board of Canada, and the University of Ottawa President’s Circle. He is a member of the Georgetown Law Center Hospitality Law Conference and ALIS Law Conference advisory boards. Badour is a founding member of Legal Leaders for Diversity (LLD), which promotes diversity in the legal industry.

In 2002, Badour was named one of Canada’s top general counsels by Lexpert magazine. In 2006, he was bestowed the Canadian General Counsel Award for Dealmaker of the Year. He was inducted into the University of Ottawa Law School Honour Society in 2010 in recognition of his contribution to the legal community and to the law school. Badour holds a BA cum laude in political science from Concordia University in Montreal and an LLL and LLB from the University of Ottawa, and he is a member of the Ontario and Quebec bar associations.

GARY E. AXELROD
PARTNER AND CO-CHAIR, HOSPITALITY, GAMING, AND LEISURE INDUSTRY GROUP LATHAM & WATKINS

Gary E. Axelrod is a partner in the Chicago office of Latham & Watkins, where his practice focuses on complex business transactions in the real estate, hospitality, gaming, and leisure industries for real estate private equity sponsors and funds, REITs, institutional investors, real estate and hotel operating companies, and entrepreneurial developers engaged in all aspects of real estate investment and development. He has significant experience in the hospitality industry, representing owners and operators in connection with the sale, acquisition, development, financing, ownership, and management of hotel, resort, and gaming properties. He also represents corporate, venture capital, and other private equity clients in bankruptcies, restructurings, mergers, acquisitions, and dispositions involving portfolio companies and their real estate assets. Axelrod was named a Law360 MVP for notable legal work in the hospitality practice area in 2013 and 2015 and is regularly recognized in Chambers USA and The Legal 500 United States.

RICHARD BAKER
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, OPERATIONS DIRECTOR—ASIA MANDARIN ORIENTAL HOTEL GROUP

Richard Baker is executive vice president and operations director—Asia, responsible for the operations of the group’s current and future portfolio of owned and managed hotels in this region, as well as the global operational functions of the group’s spas and residences at Mandarin Oriental projects. Baker joined Mandarin Oriental in 2006 and was responsible for the operations in Americas as executive vice president. He moved to Asia in 2013 to take up his current role and is based in the group’s Hong Kong office. Baker has over 30 years’ experience in luxury hotel management, holding senior management positions with Rosewood Hotels & Resorts and Four Seasons.
NAVNEET BALI
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MEININGER HOTELS

Navneet Bali took over as chief executive officer of MEININGER Hotels in 2013 following its acquisition by Holidaybreak in the United Kingdom. He joined Holidaybreak in May 2012 as group finance director and head of corporate development from Duet Group, a private equity firm based in the United Kingdom. At Duet, he created and headed a joint venture with InterContinental Hotels, the world’s largest hotel chain, to build Holiday Inn Express Hotels. Previous assignments include chief financial officer and head of corporate development at ebookers, a leading European online travel company, and director of HVS International, a leading hotel consulting firm. His appointment aims to help MEININGER to grow into the leading international brand in its sector. He has more than 29 years of experience in the hotel, travel, and e-commerce industries.

BRIAN BARR
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION, IT, AND E-COMMERCE
TRUMP HOTELS

Brian Barr, a 20-year hospitality technology veteran, is senior vice president of business transformation, IT, and e-commerce for Trump Hotels.

Most recently, he served as vice president of technology for Hampshire Hotels, developing improved systems, processes, and procedures and creating a roadmap to support the aggressive growth plans of the company.

Previously, Barr led e-commerce operations at The Leading Hotels of the World where he was responsible for spearheading two redesigns of the company’s website, leading to a 110% booking conversion rate increase. Barr also worked with Starwood Hotels on the rollout of new systems throughout the United States and Canada, and at Wyndham Worldwide where he worked on the relaunch of the Wyndham Hotels website. In addition, he created the technology infrastructure and process at BR Guest Hospitality and developed the online strategy for the launch of James Hotels.

Barr studied computer science in Chicago, Illinois at the College of DuPage and at DeVry University. He also is one of the founding members of the PCI Roundtable, created by the Hospitality Financial & Technology Professionals organization in 2011 for the purpose of helping hoteliers understand and comply with ever-changing credit card security standards.

GEOFF A. BALLOTTI
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
WYNDHAM HOTEL GROUP

Geoff A. Ballotti is the president and chief executive officer of Wyndham Hotel Group, the world’s largest and most diverse hotel company with approximately 7,540 hotels and 650,200 rooms in 71 countries. He is responsible for the company’s strategic direction, operation, growth, and performance.

Previously, Ballotti served six years as president and chief executive officer of Wyndham Exchange & Rentals where he oversaw a network of renowned accommodation brands serving over 3.7 million RCI timeshare owners and millions of annual vacation renters.

Prior to joining the Wyndham Worldwide family of companies, Ballotti spent 20 years in various leadership positions at Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide. Previously, he was a banking officer in the commercial real estate group at the Bank of New England.

Ballotti has served on the board of directors for Christel House International and the executive committee of the American Resort & Development Association. He is active on the CEO Council of the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the US Travel Association’s CEO Roundtable. He holds a bachelor’s degree from Colby College and a master’s degree from Harvard University.
MARIA BARTIROMO
ANCHOR AND GLOBAL MARKETS EDITOR
FOX BUSINESS NETWORK

Maria Bartiromo joined FOX Business Network (FBN) as global markets editor in January 2014. She is the anchor of Mornings with Maria on FBN, and on FOX News Channel (FNC), she anchors Sunday Morning Futures, the most-watched Sunday morning program on cable. She formerly anchored Opening Bell with Maria Bartiromo on FBN.

Bartiromo has covered business and the economy for more than 25 years and was one of the building blocks of business cable network CNBC. During her 20-year tenure as the face of CNBC, she launched the network’s morning program, Squawk Box; anchored The Closing Bell with Maria Bartiromo; and was the anchor and managing editor of the nationally syndicated On the Money with Maria Bartiromo, formerly The Wall Street Journal Report with Maria Bartiromo.

Bartiromo has been a pioneer in her industry. In 1995, she became the first journalist to report live from the floor of the New York Stock Exchange on a daily basis. She joined CNBC in 1993 after five years as a producer, writer, and assignment editor with CNN Business News, where she wrote and produced some of CNN's top business programs.

She has received numerous prestigious awards, including two Emmy Awards and a Gracie Award. Her first Emmy was for her 2008 news and documentary coverage of the 2007-2008 financial collapse and her "Bailout Talks Collapse" coverage was broadcast on NBC Nightly News. She later won a second Emmy for her 2009 documentary, "Inside the Mind of Google," which aired globally on CNBC. Bartiromo won a Gracie Award for “Greenspan: Power, Money & the American Dream,” also broadcast globally on CNBC.

In 2009, the Financial Times named her one of the “50 Faces That Shaped the Decade,” and in 2011, she was the first female journalist to be inducted into the Cable Hall of Fame. Bartiromo is the author of several books, including The Weekend That Changed Wall Street, published by Portfolio / Penguin, and The 10 Laws of Enduring Success, published by Random House; both were released in 2010.

Bartiromo writes a monthly column for USA Today. She also has written weekly columns for Businessweek and Milano Finanza magazines, as well as monthly columns for Individual Investor, Ticker, and Reader’s Digest magazines. She has been published in the Financial Times, Newsweek, Town and Country, Registered Rep, and the New York Post.

Bartiromo is a member of the board of trustees of New York University, the board of directors of the Young Global Leaders of the World Economic Forum, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Economic Club of New York, and the board of directors of The National Italian American Foundation (NIAF). She graduated from New York University, where she studied journalism and economics. She also served as an adjunct professor at NYU Stern School of Business for the fall semesters of 2010 through 2013.

CARLOS BECIL
CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
EQUINOX

Carlos Becil joined Equinox in May 2013 as chief marketing officer and senior vice president of marketing to spearhead marketing initiatives, consumer engagement programs, brand partnerships, and to identify growth opportunities.

A veteran to luxury businesses, Becil has extensive experience in the industry, most recently leading brand management for The W, St. Regis, The Luxury Collection, and Le Meridien brands under the Starwood luxury and design brands portfolio. Becil was responsible for all marketing, public relations, digital and social media, and guest experience programs. Prior to his appointment at Starwood, Becil spent several years at Kraft Food leading a $1 billion portfolio of brands.

Becil earned a Bachelor of Science in accounting from the NYU Stern School of Business, as well as an MBA from University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business.

MONTY J. BENNETT
FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN, AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF ASHFORD GROUP OF COMPANIES

Monty J. Bennett is the founder, chairman, and chief executive officer of the Ashford Group of Companies. Bennett is a member of the American Hotel & Lodging Association’s Industry Real Estate Finance Advisory Council (IREFAC); the Global Advisory Council of HOFTEL, a worldwide hotel ownership group; and the advisory editorial board for the Global Hotel Network. Bennett received the Top-Performing CEO Award from HVS in 2011. This award is presented each year to the CEO in the hospitality industry who offers the best value to shareholders based upon HVS’ pay-for-performance model. Bennett holds a Master of Business Administration from the S.C. Johnson Graduate School of Management at Cornell University and earned a Bachelor of Science with distinction from the School of Hotel Administration, also at Cornell University. He is a life member of the Cornell Hotel Society.
PETER BENUDIZ  
PARTNER  
SIDLEY AUSTIN

Peter Benudiz is a partner at Sidley and co-leader of the global real estate practice. He is regularly called upon to provide strategic advice and guidance to boards of directors and senior management of operating businesses on various cross-border and domestic matters. Benudiz has advised on billions of dollars of hospitality, real estate, corporate finance, and M&A deals, including domestic and cross-border leveraged private equity deals. He has counseled some of the world’s leading financial institutions and private equity funds on the acquisition, financing, and restructuring of major real estate and hotel projects. Benudiz earned his JD from Harvard Law School, where he was a teaching fellow at the Harvard University Department of Government. He graduated with an AB from the University of California, Berkeley.

SCOTT D. BERMAN  
PRINCIPAL AND INDUSTRY LEADER,  
HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE  
PwC

Scott D. Berman is a principal and the industry leader for the hospitality and leisure subsector at PwC, leading the firm’s industry program focused on client service, industry perspective, and research. Berman has over 30 years of diversified experience in the areas of commercial and financial diligence, market and business strategy, and subject matter expert advisory within the hospitality, tourism, and leisure sectors. Berman has advised on billions of dollars of hotel investment activity, from complex single asset deals to some of the sector’s most recognized branded portfolio transactions. He continues to serve as a strategic adviser to both public and private company boards, industry associations, and academic research communities. In his 24 years at PwC, he has provided consulting services in over 40 countries across the firm’s network and in all 50 states.

Prior to joining PwC, Berman was the director of development for Hilton International where he was responsible for brand development and acquisition of existing properties in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Berman is an active member of the Urban Land Institute Hotel Development Council (HDC) and its former chair; a member of the advisory board of the Cornell University Center for Hospitality Research; a member of the executive board of the Greater Miami and the Beaches Hotel Association; a trustee of the American Resort Development Association; and a member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants. He sits on the executive planning committee of the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference.

Berman has appeared on CNN and CNBC as an industry expert and is frequently quoted on hospitality issues in The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, The New York Times, Forbes, and a variety of industry publications. He has recently written several academic journal articles for both the Cornell Hospitality Quarterly and the Center for Hospitality Research. Berman holds a degree in hotel administration from Cornell University.

RAVNEET BHANDARI  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
LODGIQ

With over two decades of experience in the hospitality and gaming industries, Ravneet Bhandari is a leading expert and pioneer in strategic revenue growth and optimization. He has an exemplary track record of building visionary and entrepreneurial teams at various organizations, and has delivered more than $1 billion in holistic revenue gains over the course of his career. He was the first-ever head of revenue management for Hyatt International, and subsequently for Caesars Entertainment, and is credited with creating and leading the integrated discipline of revenue strategy, marketing, and technology for Trump Entertainment Resorts. He also served as an executive consultant for Starwood Capital, where he advised on and managed various aspects of business strategy and portfolio optimization for Louvre Hotels. Most recently, he was the chief commercial officer for Nor1.

ADITYA BHOOPATHY  
PRINCIPAL AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,  
INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT  
NOBLE INVESTMENT GROUP

Aditya Bhoopathy is a principal at Noble Investment Group with primary responsibility for capital market relationships, asset dispositions, and transaction management. In addition, he leads contract documentation and closings related to new acquisitions, development, and financing for all investments. Bhoopathy has more than 17 years of hospitality industry experience and has participated in over $1.9 billion worth of real estate transactions for Noble since joining the firm in 1999. He became a partner in 2006 and is a regular panelist at lodging, investment, and financing conferences. Bhoopathy earned a BS from the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University. He is an executive committee member of the Atlanta Hospitality Alliance and a member of the Urban Land Institute and the Hotel Asset Managers Association.
GAURAV BHUSHAN  
GLOBAL CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER  
ACCORHOTELS

Gaurav Bhushan is the global chief development officer of AccorHotels, responsible for overseeing the group’s hotel development strategy worldwide. Reporting to CEO and Chairman Sébastien Bazin, Bhushan manages the group’s relationships with investors and partners and is responsible for signing new hotels to the network.

AccorHotels currently has almost 3,800 hotels across 92 countries. AccorHotels’ broad portfolio of hotel brands—including Sofitel, Pullman, MGallery, Grand Mercure, The Sebel, Novotel, Mercure, ibis, ibis Styles, and ibis budget—provides an extensive offering from luxury to budget. With a strong development pipeline of more than 875 hotels and over 150,000 rooms, AccorHotels opens, on average, a new hotel every two days somewhere in the world.

Bhushan began his career with Accor in 1995 in Australia, where he held various posts in operations and finance. From 2006, he headed the Asia Pacific development teams. It was in this capacity that he was able to secure the acquisition of Mirvac Hotels & Resorts in Australia and New Zealand, and more recently, the strategic alliance with Huazhu in China. He was promoted to global chief development officer in July 2015.

Bhushan earned an MBA from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT University) and a postgraduate diploma in applied finance and investments from the Securities Institute of Australia.

BARRY A.N. BLOOM  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
XENIA HOTELS & RESORTS

Barry A.N. Bloom, PhD, is executive vice president and chief operating officer of Xenia Hotels & Resorts. Bloom is responsible for direct oversight of the company’s asset management and project management functions, as well as other strategic and operational functions. Prior to joining Xenia, he served as an associate professor in the School of Hospitality Administration at Boston University. He also co-founded, and was a principal of, Abacus Lodging Investors, a hotel investment and advisory firm. Prior to his academic career, he was executive vice president of portfolio management and administration with CNL Hotels & Resorts, where he was responsible for oversight of the company’s $6.6 billion portfolio. Prior to CNL, he served as vice president of investment management for Hyatt Hotels Corporation. In addition, Bloom has worked for Tishman Hotel & Realty, VMS Realty Partners, and Pannell Kerr Forster (now PKF Consulting). Bloom earned a Bachelor of Science, as well as an MBA, from Cornell University. He also earned a Doctor of Philosophy in hospitality management from Iowa State University.

GREG BINGAMAN  
DIRECTOR, ASSET MANAGEMENT  
WESTMONT HOSPITALITY GROUP

Greg Bingaman is director, asset management of Westmont Hospitality Group, where he manages luxury and full-service hotel portfolios in a variety of partnerships and private equity funds. Previously, Bingaman served as executive director, asset management of Legacy Hotels REIT, where he oversaw a $2 billion publicly traded hotel portfolio. In the late 1990s, Bingaman was a founding principal of Boutique Hotel Group, a privately held hotel management company headquartered in New York City. Starting his hospitality career at The Ritz-Carlton Chicago, Bingaman has worked in hotel operations with Four Seasons, Swissôtel, Ritz-Carlton, and Fairmont. Bingaman is an active member of the Hospitality Asset Managers Association. He earned an MMH in real estate finance from the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University and a Bachelor of Arts in economics from DePauw University.

MICHAEL D. BLUHM  
MANAGING DIRECTOR, GLOBAL HEAD OF LODGING AND LEISURE  
MORGAN STANLEY

As a managing director of investment banking at Morgan Stanley, Michael D. Bluhm is responsible for providing capital raising and financial advisory services within the real estate industry. Additionally, he is head of Morgan Stanley’s global lodging investment banking practice. Throughout his career he has been directly involved in more than $150 billion of public and private debt, equity, and equity-linked offerings, as well as a range of merger, acquisition, and restructing assignments, primarily with publicly traded companies. Bluhm is a member of the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts, International Council of Shopping Centers, and the Urban Land Institute.
RICHARD BORN
PRINCIPAL
BD HOTELS

In 1986, Richard Born and Ira Drukier partnered to form BD Hotels, a real estate development and hotel operation company. Currently, BD has ownership interests in several billion dollars’ worth of properties, most of which is debt-free or significantly underleveraged. They have slowly built their portfolio through the acquisition and improvement of well-located undervalued buildings. Currently, they own and operate 26 hotels with over 5,000 rooms. Born and Drukier have developed small luxury hotels, The Bowery and The Mercer, as well as large commercial hotels, The Wellington and The Holiday Inn Midtown. More recently, BD has experimented with pushing the envelope of traditional hotels. In 2007, they opened the first Pod Hotel where the average room size is 120 square feet. They currently have two operating Pod Hotels, with another four in development. On the other end of the spectrum, in 2008 they opened The Greenwich Hotel, redefining the uppermost end of the boutique hotel market.

BARRETT R. BOSTON
PRESIDENT, AMERICAS
TRAVELCLICK

As president of the Americas, Barrett R. Boston is responsible for leading TravelClick’s business in the United States, Canada, and Latin America. He has spent most of his career in enterprise technology and brings a strong mix of sales, strategy, product, and marketing experience to TravelClick.

Prior to joining TravelClick, Boston was at IBM, where he led a number of business units during his tenure. In his most recent role as vice president, big data and analytics, Boston was the global general manager for this strategic growth unit and led sales worldwide. Prior to that role, he spearheaded IBM’s global competitive strategy program. Boston also ran global sales for the database division.

Earlier in his career, Boston worked for Storage Networks, a pioneer in the data storage-as-a-service market, and for Stonington Partners, a private equity group based in New York. Boston earned his undergraduate degree from Duke University and his MBA from Harvard Business School.

PATRICK T. BOSWORTH
CO-FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DUETTO

As chief executive officer of Duetto, Patrick T. Bosworth spearheads the firm’s strategy and vision, while also championing a new approach to revenue management in presentations at industry conferences around the world and in columns in trade publications. Under Bosworth’s leadership, Duetto has grown to nearly 100 employees, supporting more than 1,000 hotel and casino properties around the world.

Before founding Duetto, Bosworth most recently was director of yielding and business strategy for Wynn Las Vegas. He owned responsibility for the revenue management of the Wynn and Encore resort-casinos, and during his tenure, he realigned strategic marketing functions and formulated new pricing strategies for the properties.

Previously, Bosworth’s work in the public sector at the United States Department of Labor drove the modernization of financial reporting standards in order to make labor unions more accountable to their members—the first major update of those processes since the 1950s. Bosworth earned an MBA from Harvard Business School and a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University of San Diego.

CHERYL BOYER
CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
FULCRUM HOSPITALITY

Cheryl Boyer is the chief operating officer of Fulcrum Hospitality, a boutique operating partner, asset manager, and transaction adviser in the lodging and gaming space. The firm has principal investments in hospitality assets, maintains acquisitions relationships with major investment banks and institutional private equity firms, and asset manages or advises on over 10,000 hotel rooms worldwide. Boyer has over 25 years of experience in providing consulting and asset management to institutional investors, lenders, and other key industry players. Previously, Boyer was the president of Lodging Advisors, a highly regarded consulting practice with which Fulcrum maintains a strategic alliance. Boyer has held senior leadership roles with PwC’s hospitality and leisure financial advisory practice and Hotel Partners, and has additional consulting experience with Landauer Associates and Laventhal & Horwath. Boyer started her career in hotel operations working with InterContinental Hotels and Accor and is a graduate of Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration.
ELLEN BROWN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
ACQUISITIONS AND DEVELOPMENT
DENIHAN INVESTMENTS

Ellen Brown spearheads Denihan’s expansion efforts, including acquisitions and disposessions, joint ventures, and management agreements. She has overseen significant transactions for the company including Denihan’s $910 million joint venture with Pebblebrook Hotel Trust, the company’s half-billion dollar recapitalization in 2006, and its acquisition and growth of The James brand including The James Chicago, New York, South Beach, and West Hollywood (under construction). Prior to joining Denihan, Brown provided advisory services to hospitality clients at PwC, Landauer Associates, and Laventhol & Horwath.

Named a “Woman of Influence” by Real Estate Forum in 2013, Brown is a noted authority on hotel real estate and speaks often at the industry’s most influential investment forums. Brown is actively involved with the President’s Council of Cornell Women, WX New York Women in Real Estate, and the Women in Hospitality Investment Network (WHIN). She is a member of the executive planning committee of the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference. Brown is a graduate of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

VAIL R. BROWN
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING
STR

Vail R. Brown is senior vice president of global business development and marketing for STR. STR provides clients from multiple market sectors with premium global data benchmarking, analytics, and marketplace insights. Founded in 1985, STR maintains a presence in 10 countries around the world with corporate North American headquarters in Hendersonville, Tennessee, and international headquarters in London, England.

Brown is responsible for the overall coordination, functional management, and leadership of the business development and marketing strategies for STR. Along with hotel-specific sales and marketing, Brown’s efforts are directed toward expanding relationships with third-party vendors by promoting new products and services. She often is featured as a guest speaker at international, national, regional, and state conferences. Brown is the immediate past chair for the AH&LA Women In Lodging (WIL) executive council, immediate past chair for the HSMAI Foundation board of directors, and a member of the Women’s Political Collaborative of Tennessee. She is the recipient of the 2013 American Hotel & Lodging Association John Whitaker Award.

Prior to joining STR, Brown was the director of membership development for the Tennessee Hotel & Lodging Association (now Tennessee Hospitality Association) and the Greater Nashville Hotel & Lodging Association. Brown holds a Bachelor of Science from Western Kentucky University in political science and environment studies.

ERIK BROWNING
VICE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS CONSULTING
THE RAINMAKER GROUP

Erik Browning is the vice president of business consulting for the Rainmaker Group. In this capacity, he strives to ensure Rainmaker’s suite of products helps customers meet their business objectives. He also works with the product development team on efforts to continuously improve revenue management solutions. Prior to joining Millennium Hotels and Resorts, Browning spent more than 10 years with Hilton Worldwide, where he served as the senior regional director of revenue management, overseeing revenue for hotels along the East Coast, including properties such as the Waldorf Astoria New York, Hilton New York, Boca Raton Resort and Beach Club, Casa Marina Resort, Hilton Boston Logan Airport, and Conrad New York. Browning has worked with numerous brands throughout the hospitality industry including Winegardner & Hammons, where he developed the organization’s first revenue management standards for the company operating brands, such as Marriott, Embassy Suites, Doubletree, Radisson, Homewood Suites, and Holiday Inn.

Browning has been an adjunct professor at Boston University, where he developed the university’s first revenue management course, “SHA 360: Introduction to Hospitality Revenue Management,” which has now become one of the school’s graduation requirements. He has appeared on Fox Business and has spoken at major industry conferences and events. Browning earned a BS from the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University.
MARK W. BRUGGER
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DIAMONDRock HOSPITALITY COMPANY

Mark W. Brugger is the president, chief executive officer, and a director of DiamondRock Hospitality Company, a leading lodging-focused real estate investment trust with an enterprise value of approximately $3 billion. DiamondRock controls more than 11,000 hotel rooms in the United States with a concentration of properties in New York City, Chicago, and Boston. Brugger co-founded the company in 2004 and successfully led its initial public offering (IPO) on the New York Stock Exchange the following year; since then, DiamondRock has undergone a period of substantial growth. Brugger has received recognition for his work at DiamondRock, including being named to the Forbes list of America’s Most Powerful CEOs 40 and Under and more recently as a finalist for the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Award.

Brugger has over two decades of experience in real estate, capital markets, and structured finance, including former roles with Marriott International. Brugger was the lead negotiator on over a billion dollars of transactions while at Marriott. Prior to Marriott, Brugger gained his real estate experience while working as a land developer with a multinational homebuilder, and as a commercial broker specializing in investment sales with a leading brokerage house.

Brugger also is a member of the Urban Land Institute, YPO International, and Marriott’s Owner Advisory Council. Brugger earned his JD with honors from The Washington College of Law at American University and a BA in philosophy from the University of Maryland. He is a member of the Maryland Bar.

CIA BUCKLEY MARAKOVITS
CHIEF INVESTMENT OFFICER
DUNE REAL ESTATE PARTNERS

Prior to joining Dune in 2007, Cia Buckley Marakovits was the president of the US Fund Business for JER Partners, an affiliate of the JE Robert Companies. Buckley Marakovits joined JER in 1997 and held a variety of positions there, including chief financial officer, head of asset management, head of acquisitions, and most recently, president of the US Fund Business. During her tenure at JER, Buckley Marakovits also served on the JER Global Investment Committee, the European Investment Committee, and the JRT Investment Committee. From 1997 to her departure in 2007, Buckley Marakovits had management responsibility for the acquisition and asset management of over $6 billion of US investments, including REO assets, development transactions, complex portfolios, and real estate operating companies. Before joining JER, Buckley Marakovits spent over nine years in the real estate investment banking group of Bankers Trust, where she successfully managed acquisitions of over $2 billion in assets, including distressed mortgage portfolios, operating company investments, and structured debt investments.

Buckley Marakovits is a trustee and member of the investment committee of the Urban Land Institute and a member of its Women’s Leadership Initiative. She is a member of the Pension Real Estate Association, serves as a member of Columbia Business School’s MBA Real Estate Program Advisory Board, and is a member of the executive committee of the Samuel Zell and Robert Lurie Real Estate Center at The Wharton School of Business. Buckley Marakovits is a member of Women Executives in Real Estate (“WX”) and was honored as the WX Woman of the Year in 2011. She also was selected by PERE as one of the top 10 women in real estate private equity. Buckley Marakovits received an MBA from Columbia University and a BA from Lafayette College.
ANDREW BULLARD
VICE PRESIDENT AND ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL
HOST HOTELS & RESORTS

Andrew Bullard is currently vice president and assistant general counsel at Host Hotels & Resorts in Bethesda, Maryland. His work focuses on acquisitions, dispossession and financing of hotels, hotel management and operating agreements, development, and negotiating and implementing joint ventures. He previously was located in Host's Singapore office and has significant experience with hotel transactions in Asia and Australia. He is a graduate of Georgetown University Law Center and Bucknell University.

JEFF BZDAWKA
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL HOTEL OPERATIONS
HYATT HOTELS COOPERATION

Jeff Bzdwarka recently rejoined Hyatt in 2012, and his team serves as the bridge between technology and property operations. Bzdwarka is responsible for establishing and executing the portfolio roadmap of all global property systems and solutions deployed to support Hyatt’s global brands. This includes PMS and POS, guest service and spa applications, guest Internet access, interactive TV, and telecommunications systems. Prior to Hyatt, Bzdwarka was the chief operating officer for TravelClick, where he managed a cross-functional, geographically dispersed team that provided hotel business process management and distribution solutions for over 30,000 customers across 140 countries. Prior to that, he worked for Pegasus Solutions as senior vice president of service delivery, where he created a functional service delivery organization with focus on enhancing customer experience and improving operational efficiencies. He also served as Pegasys’ senior vice president of financial services, focused on providing centralized travel agency commissions payment services and was responsible for product development, product delivery, sales, and support for the global service offering. Earlier in his career, he served as the vice president of strategic information systems for Security Capital Group in Atlanta, Georgia where he managed IS for Homestead Guest Studios. He graduated magna cum laude from the University of Wisconsin-Stout with a BS in hotel, restaurant, and institutional management, and is active with the university’s foundation and alumni programs.

JIM BUTLER
CHAIRMAN, GLOBAL HOSPITALITY GROUP
JEFFER MANGELS BUTLER & MITCHELL

Jim Butler is a founding partner of Jeffer Mangels Butler & Mitchell (JMBM) and one of the top hotel lawyers in the world. Devoting 100 percent of his practice to hospitality, Butler is author of HotelLawBlog.com and chairman of the global hospitality group, which focuses on representing hotel owners, developers, and lenders.

Butler and his team have helped clients as business and legal advisers on more than $71 billion of hotel purchase, sale, financing, and other transactions, involving more than 3,800 properties all over the world. In the last 18 months, they have closed more than $1 billion (and sourced more than $700 million) in EB-5 loans for developer-clients.

In addition to acquisitions, dispossession, and financing, the group handles ADA compliance and defense, hotel mixed-use development, labor and employment, management, branding and franchise agreements, and litigation. With experience gained from more than 1,000 bankruptcies, receiverships, and workouts, the group uses innovative solutions to unlock and create value for lenders and opportunistic investors for distressed assets.

BART CARNANAHAN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
OF GLOBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
FOUR SEASONS HOTELS AND RESORTS

Bart Carnahan oversees global business development efforts at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, working collaboratively with teams around the world to advance the company’s position as the partner of choice for luxury hotel and residential projects. With more than 25 years of experience in the international lodging and hospitality industry, Carnahan is responsible for bringing people and capital together to support the company’s growth objectives and ensure Four Seasons is well represented in the world’s most important and desirable destinations.

Under Carnahan’s leadership, Four Seasons continues to leverage its single luxury brand to grow its global portfolio through a combination of new builds, strategic conversions, and adaptive reuses of historic buildings, all while maintaining its focus on custom-designed properties that are purpose-built for each owner and each market.

Prior to joining Four Seasons, Carnahan spent eight years with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide as senior vice president of acquisitions and development, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East (EAME), and 18 years with Marriott International in various roles, including his last position as senior vice president of development.
JAMES CARROLL
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CRESTLINE HOTELS & RESORTS

James Carroll is the president and chief executive officer of Crestline Hotels & Resorts. Carroll joined Crestline in 2004 from Dell, where he held several operations and financial management positions. In his initial role at Crestline, Carroll served as senior vice president and treasurer. In 2006 he was promoted to chief financial officer, and in 2010 was promoted to president and chief financial officer of Crestline Hotels & Resorts.

As CEO of Crestline, Carroll has responsibility for all corporate functions and the management of the company’s portfolio of over 105 managed properties in 27 states throughout the United States. During his tenure with Crestline, Carroll also was closely involved in the formation and growth of Playa Hotels & Resorts, an international private equity real estate venture. He assisted in raising over $580 million of equity and secured over $835 million of corporate and property level debt financing for international projects.

Carroll serves on the board of directors for Armada Hoffler Properties and for ServiceSource. Carroll holds a Master in Business Administration from Harvard Business School, and is a graduate of the US Naval Academy. Previously, he served as a naval aviator and lieutenant in the United States Navy.

RONALD CASTRO
STRATEGIC MARKETING AND E-COMMERCE CONSULTANT; ADJUNCT FACULTY MEMBER, NYU SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES TISCH CENTER FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Ronald Castro is a strategist with over 15 years of progressive marketing experience in the hospitality and tourism, consumer package goods, and financial services fields. Currently, Castro works as a consultant dedicated to supporting businesses as they create growth while gaining a competitive advantage through the execution of data-driven marketing programs. His existing portfolio of clients includes an e-commerce platform, a commercial bank, and a number of hedge funds that currently invest in the travel technology and hospitality field. Additionally, Castro serves as an adjunct professor of marketing strategies in the graduate hospitality industry studies program at the NYU School of Professional Studies Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism.

Prior to his current work in advising, Castro gained his expertise in B2C and B2B marketing by holding various roles in brand management and business development at Hotwire.com, Expedia, and Johnson & Johnson Consumer Goods with the Neutrogena, Aveeno, Clean & Clear, and Visine brands. Specifically, he spearheaded the creation of integrated marketing programs at J&J, utilizing an optimal combination of marketing disciplines, including positioning, PR, advertising, digital marketing, and social media.

Castro holds a bachelor’s degree in marketing and communications from Boston College and a master’s degree in hospitality industry studies from the NYUSPS Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism.

JAIMIE CHOI
MANAGER, HOTEL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
TRUMP HOTELS

Jaimie Choi is a manager within the hotel development group at Trump Hotels. She is responsible for identifying, underwriting, and negotiating luxury, mixed-use opportunities for the team globally. Prior to Trump Hotels, she worked as a consulting and valuation associate at HVS for two years based in New York. During this time, she completed appraisals, feasibility studies, and market studies for hotels across the United States, with a total combined valuation in excess of $2 billion. Choi graduated from the NYU School of Professional Studies with a BS in hotel and tourism management.
**SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES**

**38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:**

**ISABELLE CLAVER**  
**DIRECTOR, HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE**  
**PWC**

Isabelle Claver is a director in the hospitality and leisure consulting group of PwC based in Miami, Florida. Prior to joining PwC, Claver worked in luxury hotels in various operational roles in Europe, Asia, and the United States. Today, she directs the day-to-day operations of the PwC hospitality and leisure practice in Miami. Since joining PricewaterhouseCoopers over 15 years ago, Claver has worked on a multitude of engagements for clients ranging from financial institutions and developers to governmental agencies. She is a specialist in the mixed-use resort development sector with expertise in fractional ownership, resort residential development, condominium-hotel projects, and recreational facilities such as golf courses and marinas. Over the past several years, Claver has focused on assisting clients with distressed properties ranging from resorts in the Caribbean to condominium-hotel projects throughout South Florida. Claver also has been actively involved in a number of litigation support engagements related to landmark cases involving disputes between hotel owners and hotel companies. She also has testified in federal court and in arbitration hearings as an expert witness on hospitality-related issues. Claver is an active member of the Cornell Hotel Society South Florida Chapter and the Urban Land Institute. She is often asked to speak at industry conferences on topics ranging from management contracts to investment in the hotel industry throughout the Americas.

**MEGHAN COCCI**  
**CO-CHAIR, GLOBAL HOTELS AND LEISURE**  
**DENTONS**

Meghan Coccì is co-chair of Dentons’ global hotels and leisure sector and managing partner of the Phoenix office. As an adviser to top hotel and resort owners, investors and operators around the globe, she works hand-in-hand with her clients to help them successfully negotiate transactions involving the management, acquisition, and development of hotels, resorts, spas, restaurants, golf courses, and mixed-use projects worldwide. Her clients rely on her because she understands the key role that business, operations, and legal issues play in long-term management and license agreements for hotel and leisure projects, especially in the upscale and luxury sectors of the industry. Cocci holds a “Band 1” ranking in the prestigious Chambers USA: America’s Leading Lawyers for Business and has been selected by her peers and clients as one of the top hospitality and leisure lawyers in the United States in the 2007–2015 editions. She also has been named a Hospitality MVP of the Year by Law360 every year since 2013.

**YVONNE CHOI**  
**CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER**  
**CACHET HOTEL GROUP**

Yvonne Choi is the chief development officer—Americas and global head of residential. In this role, she is responsible for the development and expansion of Cachet Hotel Group hotels, resorts, and mixed-use developments throughout the Americas. Prior to her current position, she served as chief marketing officer and oversaw global brand management, corporate marketing, and communications.

Prior to Cachet, Choi worked at SBE’s international development team based in Los Angeles. Choi began her career at the Corcoran Group, New York City’s premiere luxury property and real estate marketing company. As Corcoran’s development and acquisitions manager, she oversaw the sales and marketing of a luxury residential portfolio worth in excess of $500 million. Choi’s education includes a double degree in marketing and business management from the NYU Stern School of Business.

**LAWRENCE COHEN**  
**PARTNER AND HOSPITALITY GROUP LEADER**  
**MARKS PANETH**

Lawrence Cohen is a partner at Marks Paneth. He also serves as the firm’s hospitality group leader. He rejoined the firm in 2009 after having served for many years as the president and chief executive officer of The Griffin Group, the private equity investment and management company of the late Merv Griffin that invested in a variety of industries including media, entertainment, and hospitality.

Cohen has strong roots in the hospitality industry. The Griffin Group and its affiliates owned and managed properties that ranged from high-end resorts to limited service properties. Cohen spearheaded all aspects of the business including acquisition, development and redevelopment, financing, management team hiring, supervision of operations, and eventual sales. Today, Cohen’s practice includes a wide variety of hotels (both independent and flagged), management companies, restaurants, and vendors in the industry. Cohen’s practice includes clients throughout the United States, particularly in New York, California, Florida, Illinois, Ohio, Texas, and Washington.

At Marks Paneth, Cohen also draws on his deep experience and serves certain clients as a business coach. He often will advise family offices, entrepreneurs, CEOs, and CFOs on strategies to reposition their companies in their current business environments. In addition, Cohen has had business interests in the Los Angeles area for more than 25 years and shares responsibility for the firm’s operations on the West Coast.
JOHN L. COHLAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MARGARITAVILLE HOLDINGS

John L. Cohlan is the chief executive officer of Margaritaville Holdings, a lifestyle brand management company operating in the consumer products, hospitality, vacation ownership, gaming, restaurant, and media businesses. The brand is based upon the concept of island escapism and inspired by the iconic music, lyrics, and life of Jimmy Buffett.

Prior to joining Jimmy Buffett in 1997 to form Margaritaville Holdings, Cohlan worked for TRIARC, a publicly traded holding company comprised of consumer businesses, including Arby’s, Snapple, and RC Cola. Cohlan graduated from Princeton University, attended the London School of Economics, and graduated from the Georgetown University Law Center.

JEANMARIE COONEY
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
WYNDHAM HOTEL GROUP

Jeanmarie Cooney was named Wyndham Hotel Group executive vice president and chief financial officer in March 2015, responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company’s global finance and information technology functions.

A hospitality industry veteran with nearly 20 years of experience, she previously served as senior vice president, financial planning and analysis for Wyndham Worldwide, Wyndham Hotel Group’s parent company. In that role, she was instrumental in helping to lead the successful financial management of one of the world’s largest publicly traded hospitality companies for more than 20 consecutive quarters.

Prior to Wyndham, Cooney served more than a decade with its predecessors, Cendant and HFS, climbing the company ranks while taking on various and increasingly senior financial leadership roles. Cooney first joined HFS in 1996 as director of mergers and acquisitions after serving five years with PepsiCo. She began her career in 1988 as a senior auditor with Ernst & Young.

PETER DANNEMILLER
MANAGING DIRECTOR
HODGES WARD ELLIOTT

Peter Dannemiller is managing director of Hodges Ward Elliott (HWE), the leading hotel brokerage and investment banking firm in the United States.

Since joining HWE in 1996, Dannemiller has become one of the leading producers within the firm and the hotel investment sales and financing industry. Dannemiller has teamed with partner Mark Elliott to close sales and financing transactions totaling over $30 billion in volume during his tenure with the firm. With a strong background in finance, Dannemiller is primarily responsible for HWE’s debt placement activity, which has totaled more than $4 billion over the last eight years.

Dannemiller has been a speaker and panelist for the Atlanta Hotel Investment Conference, Hotel Asset Managers Association (HAMA) Conference, The Lodging Conference, the Midwest Lodging Investment Summit, Meet the Money, and the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference. He has been quoted in Hotel Business, Real Estate Forum, and Lodging Hospitality magazines as a hospitality brokerage expert.

Dannemiller holds a Bachelor of Science in business from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and an MBA from Emory University.

JEFFREY DAVIS
INTERNATIONAL MANAGING DIRECTOR
JLL

As international managing director, Jeffrey Davis heads the New York office of JLL’s hotels and hospitality group and oversees the group’s debt/equity capital markets platform in the United States. As a leading strategist and investment adviser for JLL, Davis has advised on and transacted in excess of $10 billion of high-profile lodging transactions and hybrid-use developments throughout the world. For more than 15 years, Davis has been intricately involved in all aspects of real estate in the United States from both an institutional and entrepreneurial perspective. With a career as a consultant, investment banker, and private developer and in institutional acquisitions, Davis has worked with world-renowned real estate companies and celebrity entrepreneurs including Ian Schrager, André Balazs, and The Trump Organization. As head of debt/equity capital markets for JLL, Davis is responsible for assisting clients in all capital raising and restructuring capacities including acquisition financing, debt/equity recapitalizations, note sales, and programmatic and asset specific joint ventures. Davis holds an MBA in real estate finance and strategic planning from the UCLA Anderson School of Management, and a Bachelor of Science from Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration, from which he graduated with honors.
MIKE DEFRINO

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
KIMPTON HOTELS & RESTAURANTS

Mike DeFrino is chief executive officer for Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants. As CEO, he is responsible for overseeing all personnel and systems to acquire, develop, renovate, operate, and maintain the growing number of hotels and restaurants managed by Kimpton, and to administer the overall operation of the company. Currently, Kimpton operates 60-plus hotels and over 70 restaurants and bars across the United States, with an additional 16 hotels in the pipeline. Kimpton was acquired by InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) in January 2015, opening the door for a global launch and accelerated growth of the Kimpton brand within the United States.

DeFrino will focus on bolstering Kimpton’s collection of boutique properties in highly desirable leisure destinations globally, ensuring that programming is a custom fit for the style of each property and its guest demographic. With a continued commitment to operational excellence, a passion for a culture that cherishes heartfelt human connections, and a dedication for infusing Kimpton’s playful spirit into the guest experience, DeFrino is a long-time champion of great living on the road.

DeFrino’s career trajectory with Kimpton has taken him from general manager (GM) to CEO in less than two decades, as he first joined the brand as the GM of the Alexis Hotel in Seattle in 1997. He also played a vital role in Kimpton’s expansion as the brand’s first East Coast vice president, and subsequently as senior vice president of hotels and executive vice president of hotels. DeFrino most recently served as Kimpton’s third COO in its more than 30-year history, during which time he oversaw operations across the entire brand, with responsibility for sales and catering, marketing, on-property guest experience, and facilities oversight. He also oversaw all operational aspects of new hotels from underwriting to opening, as well as the conversions of existing hotels to the Kimpton portfolio, the implementation of Kimpton’s management systems, and training surrounding the brand’s unique approach to customer care.

Before joining Kimpton, DeFrino worked for ANA Hotels in Washington, DC and Ritz-Carlton Hotels in Atlanta, Detroit, and Los Angeles. Originally from Connecticut, DeFrino is a graduate of Emory University in Atlanta.

MICHAEL DEPATIE

MANAGING PARTNER
KHP CAPITAL PARTNERS

Michael Depatie is managing partner of KHP Capital Partners, overseeing the investment of over $750 million of investor equity in Kimpton Hotel projects. Previously, Depatie served as president and chief executive officer of Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants and also was a member of Kimpton’s board of directors from 2003 to January 2015. Under Depatie’s leadership, Kimpton was named to Fortune magazine’s list of “100 Best Companies to Work For” six times, ranking 11th in 2015. Kimpton also was named by JD Power as the number-one hotel brand in customer satisfaction for North American upper-upscale hotels in both 2013 and 2014.

Depatie started his career with the Trammell Crow Company. He went on to become the senior vice president of finance and development with the Residence Inn Company. After the sale of Residence Inn to Marriott in 1987, Depatie co-founded Summerfield Suites, which was sold to Patriot American Corporation and subsequently to Hyatt. Depatie also served as chief financial officer of NYSE-listed La Quinta and Sunterra Corporation. Depatie also served as CFO of Internet start-up company AllAdvantage.com and telecommunications service provider Sigma Networks.

Depatie is a member of the Urban Land Institute and the Real Estate Round Table and a co-chair of the advisory board of PathNorth. He also serves on the board of directors of NASDAQ-traded Jamba Juice where he is chairman of the audit committee. Depatie also is on the advisory boards of Rocket Space and the Millennium School. Additionally, he is a trustee for the Boys and Girls Club of San Francisco. Depatie earned an MBA from Harvard Business School.
COSTA DIMAS
CHIEF BUSINESS OFFICER
OE COLLECTION
LOEWS HOTELS

In this role, Costa Dimas is responsible for overseeing and executing Loews’ new business platform: management of independent and lifestyle hotels and also for developing Loews’ proprietary offering in the boutique and lifestyle space, the OE Collection.

Dimas’ strategy aligned the OE platform with owners of and investors in significant but smaller-scale hotel assets in alluring and vibrant locations. To support the plan, Dimas has been collaborating and partnering with private equity firms, institutional investors, and real estate developers to manage existing properties and to launch new hotel developments on behalf of ownership. Under Dimas’ watch, OE’s initial focus is on North American gateway cities but also includes primary European markets.

During his tenure at Loews, Dimas also has served as senior vice president of asset management and owner relations and as vice president of food and beverage. In each role Dimas drew upon a diverse background of experience as an entrepreneur, operations leader, and executive-level strategist to deliver value and innovation to Loews and its partners.

In addition to having owned several hospitality-related businesses, Dimas proudly served as deputy chief of staff to US Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY). In this role he worked on a range of issues, including power deregulation and economic development for upstate New York, and aided in launching several New York State-based businesses. He also has worked for a private real estate development firm with national US interests.

A graduate of Columbia College of Columbia University with a degree in philosophy, Dimas serves as chair of the board of friends of Double Discovery Center, the university’s not-for-profit organization whose mission is to work with low-income Manhattan area youth.

GARY DOLLENS
GLOBAL HEAD, DESIGN/PRODUCT AND BRAND DEVELOPMENT, GLOBAL OPERATIONS
HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

Gary Dollens was appointed global head design/product and brand development for Hyatt’s global operations center in October 2014. He is responsible for the direction and execution of Hyatt’s global design, overseeing design service offices in Chicago, Zurich, Dubai, and Hong Kong. Most recently, Dollens served as senior vice president of product and brand development focusing on global product strategy. He also has held the role of global head—franchise and select brands, which included responsibility for Hyatt Place and Hyatt House, as well as franchise and owners relations.

Prior to that, he served as senior vice president of North America operations, with oversight of corporate operations (rooms, food and beverage, engineering, and spa), as well as architecture and design.

Dollens began his career with Hyatt in Oak Brook, Illinois in 1988. After holding a variety of management positions at Hyatt properties including Dearborn, Columbus, Lake Tahoe, Memphis, San Francisco, and Waikiki, Dollens was appointed hotel manager of Hyatt Regency Atlanta. In 1989, he was named general manager of Hyatt Regency St. Louis, and later served in the same role at Grand Hyatt New York and Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill. Following his tenure as vice president and managing director for Grand Hyatt New York, Dollens joined Hyatt’s corporate office in Chicago as vice president of North America operations in 2004. Dollens attended Western Illinois University where he received a Bachelor of Arts in liberal arts studies.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:

ROGER DOW
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
US TRAVEL ASSOCIATION

Roger Dow is president and chief executive officer of the US Travel Association, the Washington, DC-based organization representing all segments of travel in America—an industry that generates $2.1 trillion in economic output and supports 15 million jobs. US Travel’s mission is to increase travel to and within the United States. US Travel champions a pro-competition, pro-growth, pro-traveler agenda and advocates for policies that reduce barriers to travel and improve America’s travel infrastructure. In addition, the association provides essential research, such as the monthly Travel Trends Index, and engages, connects, and informs the travel industry at events year-round.

On several occasions, Dow has met with President Obama, administration officials, and congressional leaders to discuss important travel issues, and his efforts have resulted in major legislative victories for travelers. In particular, he was instrumental in establishing Brand USA, the highly effective national promotion program, which was reauthorized through 2020 by Congress.

In 2014, Dow launched Project: Time Off, a multifaceted, research-driven initiative aimed at shifting American culture so time off is understood as essential to personal well-being, professional success, business performance, and economic expansion. This new venture builds on other successes during Dow’s tenure, including the growth of US Travel’s annual IPW international marketplace and the Meetings Mean Business Coalition, which provides resources to promote and defend the value of face-to-face business meetings and travel on our economy.

Under Dow’s leadership, US Travel was recognized as one of Washington’s top places to work by both the Washington Post and Washingtonian magazine in 2015.

CHRIS DRAZBA
VICE PRESIDENT, CORE BRANDS AND MEXICO DEVELOPMENT
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP (IHG)

Chris Drazba is vice president, core brands and Mexico development of InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). Drazba’s primary responsibility in his current role is to grow the Holiday Inn, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites, and Candlewood Suites brands in the United States, Canada, and Mexico. He has been at IHG for 11 years and was previously the vice president, owner and franchise services, where he oversaw owner relations, IHG’s market feasibility and impact process, and development marketing.

Prior to joining IHG in 2005, Drazba worked for eight years at the Walt Disney Company. While at Disney, his duties included attractions design, development planning, labor modeling for theme parks and resorts, and redesign of the CRM and delivery systems used in guest reservations. Drazba also was on the launch team for Disney Cruise Line. Drazba has an MBA from Duke University and an industrial engineering degree from Georgia Tech.

JOEL M. EISEMANN
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, AMERICAS
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP (IHG)

Joel M. Eisemann joined the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) in September 2011 and is chief development officer, Americas. He is responsible for all development and conversion activities (both managed and franchised) for the InterContinental, Kimpton, Crowne Plaza, Hotel Indigo, EVEN Hotels, Staybridge Suites, Candlewood Suites, Holiday Inn, and Holiday Inn Express brands in the Americas. Eisemann also is responsible for the company’s transactions group for the Americas, which handles workouts and restructurings and asset management. Further, he heads up the region’s owner and franchise services team, which leads the IHG organization to attract, support, and grow with those owners and franchisees who will help the company to continue to grow its brands’ distribution and preference.

Previously, Eisemann was with Marriott International for 29 years, where he held a number of senior positions including chief owner and franchise relations officer; chief development officer, select service and extended-stay brands; executive vice president, global asset management; and senior vice president, lodging development, Asia/Pacific, based in Hong Kong. Prior to joining Marriott, he was with Laventhal & Horwath in Tampa, Florida for three years.

Eisemann serves on a variety of committees and boards including as a board member of the American Hotel & Lodging Association, fellow of the Cornell Center for Real Estate Finance, member of the Hotel Development Council at the Urban Land Institute, and member of the executive planning committee for the New York University International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference.

Eisemann is a graduate of the Master of Professional Studies program at Cornell University’s School of Hotel Administration, and he earned his AB degree in economics from Stanford University.
DAVID EISEN
EDITOR IN CHIEF
HOTEL MANAGEMENT

David Eisen is editor in chief of Hotel Management magazine, part of Questex Hospitality Group. Prior to joining Questex, he was hotel editor at Business Travel News. Eisen has a master’s degree in hospitality industry studies from New York University’s Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management. He frequently presides over and moderates panels and roundtable discussions on global hospitality development and investment.

JAMES M. ERLACHER
VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT
ACCORHOTELS

James M. Erlacher currently serves as the vice president of development for AccorHotels North America, Central America, and the Caribbean. He joined AccorHotels in 2011 as vice president of development for the Sofitel brand in the Americas.

Erlacher is responsible for strategically positioning AccorHotels for growth in key markets, fostering relations with potential partners, and identifying management contract opportunities that are aligned with AccorHotels’ strategic vision in North and Central America and the Caribbean. He works closely with the Latin American development team to nourish the group’s development in this important area of the world.

Prior to joining AccorHotels, Erlacher served as the senior vice president of development of the Americas for Jumeirah Group and senior vice president of acquisitions and development for Wyndham Hotel Group. He also has held senior management positions with Marriott International and The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company. Erlacher is an alumnus of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

CINDY ESTIS GREEN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND CO-FOUNDER
KALIBRI LABS

Cindy Estis Green’s career began in corporate marketing and senior operations roles for Hilton International. After starting up the data-mining consultancy, Driving Revenue, and selling it to Pegasus Solutions, Estis Green spent 12 years as managing partner of The Estis Group providing strategic marketing consulting to the hospitality industry. Co-author of the 2012 Distribution Channel Analysis: A Guide for Hotels and many other industry publications on the topic of marketing technology, Estis Green has been honored as one of the 25 Extraordinary Minds in Sales and Marketing, was inducted into the prestigious Hospitality Technology Hall of Fame, and named as one of Cornell University’s 90 Influential Hoteliers. She is currently a member of the HITEC Advisory Council and the HSMAI Foundation Board of Trustees, leads the AH&LA Consumer Innovation Forum and the European Hospitality Forum, and holds a board seat for The Knowland Group and the Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals (HFTP). Estis Green launched Kalibri Labs in 2012, a next-generation benchmarking platform for the digital marketplace evaluating hotel revenue performance and profit contribution. Estis Green holds a BS from Cornell University and an MBA from American University.

DERIC EUBANKS
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
ASHFORD

Deric Eubanks is the chief financial officer and treasurer of Ashford and serves as the chief financial officer and treasurer of both Ashford Hospitality Trust and Ashford Hospitality Prime. Eubanks oversees all corporate finance and financial reporting initiatives and is involved in all capital market activities including equity raises, debt financings, and loan modifications. He oversees investor relations and is responsible for overseeing and executing Ashford Hospitality Trust and Ashford Hospitality Prime hedging strategies.

Eubanks formally served as the senior vice president of finance. Prior to this role, Eubanks was vice president of investments and was responsible for sourcing and underwriting hotel investments including direct equity investments, joint venture equity, preferred equity, mezzanine loans, first mortgages, B-notes, construction loans, and other debt securities for Ashford Trust.

Eubanks has been with Ashford Trust since its initial public offering in August of 2003. He has written several articles for industry publications and is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and industry round tables. Before joining Ashford, Eubanks was a manager of financial analysis for ClubCorp, where he assisted in underwriting and analyzing investment opportunities in the golf and resort industries. Eubanks earned a BBA from Southern Methodist University and is a CFA charter holder. He is a member of the CFA Institute and the CFA Society of Dallas-Fort Worth.
ANN M. FASTIGGI
HEAD, HOSPITALITY AND LEISURE PRACTICE
RSR PARTNERS

Ann M. Fastiggi leads RSR Partners’ hospitality and leisure practice. After a decade focused on the lodging, restaurant, cruise, and travel sectors, Fastiggi joined the firm in 2014 to continue to build and strengthen the senior leadership teams of her clients.

Fastiggi began her specialization in hospitality and leisure during her seven-year tenure with Spencer Stuart, when the firm launched the practice, and has remained dedicated to serving clients as large as Hilton Worldwide and as entrepreneurial as New York Water Taxi. Her body of work includes senior assignments for Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Worldwide, Hyatt Hotels, Choice Hotels, Wyndham Worldwide, Dunkin Brands, Carlson Restaurants, Royal Caribbean, Hertz, and Ensemble Travel.

Fastiggi’s career in executive search began 20 years ago. Since then, Fastiggi has successfully completed over 200 searches in the consumer, hospitality, and media industries. Earlier in her career, Fastiggi managed talent acquisition for Time Inc. in New York during a pivotal time in the company’s history. Prior to her career in executive search, Fastiggi was the director of sales and marketing for a tour operator that specialized in custom holidays in Ireland, Scotland, and England. Fastiggi earned her master’s degree in counseling psychology from Temple University and her undergraduate degree from Boston University.

BILL J. FERGUSON
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FERGUSON PARTNERS

Bill J. Ferguson serves as chairman and chief executive officer of Ferguson Partners and as the co-chairman and co-CEO of FPL Advisory Group. Ferguson conducts senior management recruiting assignments, with a specialization in president/chief executive officer searches and recruiting assignments for boards of trustees and directors. He also conducts CEO succession planning assignments and facilitates public company board assessments and senior management assessments.

Before founding Ferguson Partners, Ferguson was a managing director with one of the leading international executive recruiting consultants. There, he co-managed the firm’s national real estate practice. Prior to focusing in real estate, Ferguson worked for General Mills in Minneapolis in strategic marketing.

Ferguson holds a BA from Harvard University, where he was a member of Phi Beta Kappa, and an MBA in marketing from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

WARREN G. FELDMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
JONATHAN NEHMER + ASSOCIATES

Warren G. Feldman, AIA, ISHC, is chief executive officer of Jonathan Nehmer + Associates, a leading architecture, interior design, and project management firm specializing in the hospitality industry. He also is a principal with HVS Design. With more than 30 years of experience, his expertise includes work as an architect and owner’s representative in the direction and management of multimillion dollar commercial, institutional, educational, residential, and hospitality projects.

Prior to joining Jonathan Nehmer + Associates, Feldman worked on the feasibility, design, and construction of diverse projects including hotels, high-rise commercial corporate headquarters, educational facilities, civic projects, and housing development projects.

He earned his bachelor’s degree and Master of Architecture from the Washington University in St. Louis and is a member of the American Institute of Architects. Complementing his education in architecture, Feldman completed his Juris Doctorate from Georgetown University and is a member of the Maryland Bar.

MICHAEL A. FISHBIN
GLOBAL AND AMERICAS HOSPITALITY LEADER
EY

Michael A. Fishbin is EY’s global and Americas hospitality leader. The hospitality practice focuses on audit, tax, transactions, development, valuations, operations, and strategy. He is an active adviser to hospitality companies, developers, private equity funds, lenders, and governments in all aspects of the hospitality, leisure, and tourism industries.

Recently, Fishbin has served as lead adviser on numerous high-profile M&A and development transactions. Fishbin is an adjunct faculty member within the NYU School of Professional Studies Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism. He holds a BA from Union College and earned his master’s degree from the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University.
STEPHEN FITZGERALD  
VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL OTA AND WHOLESALE  
HILTON WORLDWIDE  
Joining Hilton Worldwide in January of this year, as vice president, global OTA and wholesale, Stephen Fitzgerald, CHDM, leads the Hilton teams that manage relationships with OTAs worldwide, as well as relationships with wholesalers for Americas regional hotels and the company’s wholesale strategy globally. Prior to joining Hilton, Fitzgerald led sales efforts for a hospitality-focused digital marketing agency; headed market manager teams for the Americas region for Travelocity; served as chief operating officer for Sabre Hospitality Solutions; oversaw hotel, car, cruise, and rail relationships for the Sabre GDS; and worked as vice president of hotel relations and operations for Hotwire.com. Prior to this, he served as vice president of sales and marketing for a private hospitality owner-operator with 65 properties affiliated with various chains, and as a general manager for two all-suite properties.

BILL FORTIER  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, DEVELOPMENT, AMERICAS  
HILTON WORLDWIDE  
Bill Fortier was named senior vice president of development, Americas in June 2008. He is responsible for developing both the managed and franchised businesses for all of Hilton’s brands in the region. Prior to his current role, Fortier was senior vice president, franchise development of Hilton’s brand performance and development group, a position he held since 2001. In that capacity, he was responsible for overseeing franchise development efforts for Hilton Hotels Corporation’s brands in North America, including Hilton, Doubletree, Embassy Suites Hotels, Hampton Inn, Hampton Inn & Suites, Hilton Garden Inn, and Homewood Suites by Hilton. These activities also included continuing the expansion of the company’s network of hotels and ensuring the consistent delivery of brand standards from a development standpoint. Fortier joined Hilton in 1996 as vice president of franchise development, where he worked with owners to develop Hilton and Hilton Garden Inn franchised hotels in the western region. Prior to Hilton, Fortier spent 10 years at Marriott International, where he was vice president of development. Fortier earned a Bachelor of Science in hotel management from the University of Houston’s Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management.

RICHARD FLORES  
VICE PRESIDENT, BRANDING FOR RADISSON  
CARLSON REZIDOR HOTEL GROUP  
Richard Flores is the vice president of global branding for Radisson and Radisson RED. Flores develops, leads, and executes global brand strategies; defines the brand’s guest experience; and drives product development and innovation, along with defining and owning the brand’s DNA and creative expression. Currently, Flores is leading the global development of Carlson Rezidor’s newest hotel brand, Radisson RED, with its first hotels opening in 2016.

Prior to joining Carlson Rezidor, Flores spent three years with the Wyndham Hotel Group leading strategic brand marketing efforts for the Wyndham Hotels and Resorts, DREAM Hotels, and Planet Hollywood Hotels brands. Flores also served as vice president of marketing for the Larkspur Hotel & Restaurant group and was awarded the 2008 President’s Award.

Flores began his hospitality career in 2000 with Sol Meliá Hotels & Resorts, where he served as director of marketing, overseeing the Americas region for seven years. One of his greatest accomplishments during his tenure with Sol Meliá was the creation, development, and execution of the ME by Meliá hotel brand. He led the global launch of the brand in 2006 with the opening of the first hotel in Madrid, followed by hotel openings in Cancún and Cabo San Lucas.

In 2003, Flores was honored with a Rising Star Award from Travel Agent magazine, which recognizes the travel industry’s top 100 up-and-coming executives. Flores attended Florida International University.

EVAN FRANK  
CO-FOUNDER  
ONEFINESTAY  
Evan Frank is a co-founder of onefinestay and currently leads its US business. After launching in London in his capacity as head of commercial (sales and marketing), Frank moved home from London to New York City in early 2012 and established onefinestay’s US presence. In his role, Frank is responsible for growing and managing the New York City and Los Angeles businesses, as well as public policy, PR, business strategy, and team building. Prior to onefinestay, Frank spent nearly a decade in start-ups, venture capital and growth equity, and technology M&A advisory in New York and London. His first job at the age of 15 was making meatball parmigiana sandwiches at Maria’s Pizza in Spring Valley, New York.

Particular areas of interest for Frank are hiring and building corporate cultures, expansion and business development, operations management, and creating great customer and employee experiences. He occasionally blogs from motorwaystramlines.com and tweets from @evanfrank. Frank holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Michigan Ann Arbor.
MICHAEL FUERSTMAN
CO-FOUNDER AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR, PENDRY HOTELS
MONTAGE HOTELS & RESORTS

As co-founder and creative director for Pendry Hotels, Michael Fuerstman oversees the design, aesthetic, and brand development for the new line of hotels born from Montage Hotels & Resorts. Launched in October 2014, Pendry Hotels is a collection of design-focused hotels in taste-making destinations. The brand marries fashion-forward and inspired design with the renowned service culture that Montage Hotels & Resorts is known for. Pendry Hotels was co-founded by Fuerstman and his father, Alan J. Fuerstman, founder and chief executive officer of Montage Hotels & Resorts. The first Pendry Hotels property, Pendry San Diego, is expected to open in the historic Gaslamp District of San Diego in 2016.

Prior to launching Pendry Hotels, Fuerstman was the corporate director of acquisitions and development for Montage Hotels & Resorts, which he joined in 2009. During this time, he worked closely with his father, and the duo recognized an underserved niche in the hospitality market: a gap between the worlds of luxury hotels and lifestyle, design-driven hotels. The need to service this new, emerging breed of luxury hospitality guest led them to conceptualize and launch Pendry Hotels, a brand that meets at the crossroads of design, service, lifestyle, and luxury.

Fuerstman has grown up in the hospitality business, with stints as a towel boy in Las Vegas; front desk, concierge, and night audit associate in Boston; and development project manager and residential sales associate in Beverly Hills. He briefly left the industry to found the Internet start-up company, SocialMonkey.com. Fuerstman graduated from Tufts University with a degree in political science.

LAURENCE GELLER
CHAIRMAN
GELLER INVESTMENT CO.

Laurence Geller, CBE, is currently chairman, Geller Investment Co. Geller is an accomplished businessman and entrepreneur who has led multinational corporations in the hospitality industry, most recently as president and chief executive officer of Strategic Hotels & Resorts, a company he founded in 1997. Prior to Strategic Hotel Capital, Geller was chairman and chief executive officer of Geller & Co., a gaming, tourism, and lodging advisory company he founded in 1989. Geller & Co. specialized in domestic and international hotel, corporate and real estate development, financing, structuring, restructuring, and asset management. Previously, Geller held positions as executive vice president and chief operating officer of Hyatt Development Corporation, senior vice president of Holiday Inns (initially responsible for the international division and subsequently, the North American division’s growth, franchising, and operations), and director of Grand Metropolitan Hotels in London.

Geller serves on the boards of Michels & Taylor (London) and Dolphin Capital Investment. He is a former vice chairman of the Urban Land Institute’s Commercial and Retail Council and has held the position of chairman of the Industry Real Estate Financing Advisory Council of the American Hotel and Lodging Association for six non-consecutive terms. Geller serves on the executive committee of the board of Choose Chicago and Elevate Chicago, Children’s Memorial Hospital, the board of the British American Business Consul, and the American Jewish Committee. Geller is chairman of the board of trustees for the Churchill Centre and serves on its executive committee. He is ambassador for North America for the Hotel and Catering Institutional Management Association of the United Kingdom.

On December 31, 2011, Geller was named a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Geller previously served on the board of directors and audit committee of Gaylord Entertainment from 2002 until July 2006, and InnVest REIT from 2013 to 2014. Geller has over 45 years of experience in the lodging industry and has received numerous awards for his service to the hospitality industry and for his civic, educational, and philanthropic endeavors. Geller is a graduate of Ealing Technical College’s School of Hotel Management and Catering, and in May 2011 was appointed chancellor of the University of West London, the successor to Ealing College of Hotel Management and Catering.

MICHAEL F. GLENNIE
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
FRHI HOTELS & RESORTS

Michael F. Glennie is president and chief operating officer of FRHI Hotels & Resorts, a leading luxury hotel management company that operates more than 130 hotels and branded residential offerings globally under the Raffles, Fairmont, and Swissôtel brands. The company’s distinctive portfolio of luxury and upscale hotels features celebrated icons, world-class resorts, and stylish city center hotels.

Glennie is responsible for the global operations of all three hotel brands. He joined FRHI in 2005 in the role of executive vice president, real estate. Prior to joining FRHI, Glennie was president and chief executive officer of Ripplewood Lodging, based in Tokyo, Japan, and was formerly president of the Boca Raton Resort & Club and senior vice president, resort operations for the group. Earlier in his career, he held a variety of management positions with RockResorts and also served as manager of New York City’s Waldorf Astoria. With more than 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Glennie holds a bachelor’s degree in hotel administration from the University of Surrey in the United Kingdom.
DREW GOLDMAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND GLOBAL CO-HEAD,
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT BANKING
DEUTSCHE BANK SECURITIES
Drew Goldman joined Deutsche Bank in 1999 in the gaming, lodging, and leisure group. Prior to that, he was with Sun International Hotels, where he was responsible for strategic planning, corporate finance, and investor relations from 1997 to 1999. Before joining Sun International, Goldman spent five years in investment banking with Bear, Stearns & Co. and Paribas Corporation. He has focused on the gaming and leisure sectors for 20 years and has worked on both the banking and the client sides, gaining valuable perspective from working with former clients. Goldman is a frequent speaker at industry conferences and speaks on corporate financial matters relating to real estate, gaming, lodging, and leisure companies. Goldman earned an MA in economics from the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and a BA from Connecticut College.

BARRY S. GOLDSTEIN
CHIEF DIGITAL AND DISTRIBUTION OFFICER
WYNDHAM HOTEL GROUP
Barry S. Goldstein is an accomplished sales, marketing, brand, and technology executive with an over 25-year track record of successful strategic leadership. He is best known for being an innovative transformation visionary that creates value by growing revenue through the optimization of sales, marketing, digital, distribution, and technology. Goldstein is currently the chief digital and distribution officer for the Wyndham Hotel Group. He is responsible for managing and optimizing Wyndham Hotel Group’s digital assets and presence including its web and mobile sites, next generation mobile apps, online media, digital content, third party distribution, call center operations, and hotel marketing services. In addition, Goldstein is responsible for setting the company’s sales technology strategy.

Most recently, Goldstein was the chief revenue and information officer for Dolce. In this role, he was responsible for leading the sales, marketing, revenue management, brand, and technology organizations. Prior to joining Dolce, Goldstein was the vice president of global sales strategy and operations for Starwood Hotels & Resorts. He also held the position of managing director of the hospitality, retail, and consumer product vertical at Cisco Systems, as well as vice president of information systems at Panasonic. He started his career at Ernst & Young as a management consultant.

Goldstein holds a Bachelor of Science from Columbia University and completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School.

PHILLIP GORDON
PARTNER
PERKINS COIE
Phillip Gordon focuses his practice in the areas of private equity, hotel transactions and management agreements, corporate mergers and acquisitions, and representation of boards of directors of public companies. Over the years, he has supervised the acquisitions, financing, and management agreement negotiations of more than 75 hotels in North America and Europe. He has advised sponsors on establishing private equity funds and has represented the portfolio companies of the private equity funds. Gordon has handled numerous public and private corporate acquisitions and dispositions, and has advised boards of directors and committees of boards of public companies on a range of topics. Gordon is listed in The Best Lawyers in America and in Illinois Law & Politics; he also is ranked nationally in Chambers USA as a leading lawyer in leisure and hospitality. He is a frequent panelist at hotel industry seminars and has been recognized as a leader in the industry by various publications and organizations. Gordon is a graduate of Oxford University, the University of Chicago Law School, and the University of Witwatersrand.

JONATHAN D. GRAY
GLOBAL HEAD OF REAL ESTATE
BLACKSTONE
Jonathan D. Gray is global head of real estate and a member of the board of directors of Blackstone. He also sits on the firm’s management committee.

Since joining Blackstone in 1992, Gray has helped build the largest real estate platform in the world with $93 billion in investor capital under management. Blackstone’s portfolio includes hotel, office, retail, industrial, and residential properties in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

Gray currently serves as chairman of the board of Hilton Worldwide and is a board member of Brixmor Properties. He also is chairman of the board of Harlem Village Academies and a board member of Trinity School. Gray and his wife, Mindy, established the Basseter Center for BRCA at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine focused on the prevention and treatment of certain genetically caused cancers.

Gray earned a BS in economics from The Wharton School, as well as a BA in English from the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

BILL GRICE
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
JLL

Bill Grice is an executive vice president with JLL's hotels investment banking team. Based in Atlanta, Grice specializes in assisting clients with fulfilling their ongoing capital requirements by arranging financing for the acquisition of new hospitality assets, developing ground-up projects, renovating current holdings, or refinancing existing debt.

Since joining JLL in 2007, Grice has advised and closed upon over $10 billion of lodging-related recapitalizations, financings, and equity placements. Before joining JLL, Grice spent four years with GE Capital Real Estate in large loan originations. Grice brings considerable expertise across every asset class covered by the real estate capital markets, as his lending experience encompasses underwriting and structuring financing for on-balance sheet loans, securitized loans, mezzanine loans, as well as joint venture equity investments.

Grice holds an MBA from Emory University’s Goizueta Business School and is a graduate of Clemson University with a BS in economics.

ANDREW HAMILTON
PRESIDENT
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Andrew Hamilton was named the 16th president of New York University in March 2015. He most recently served as the vice chancellor of Oxford University, the university’s senior officer, after an academic career that took him from Princeton University to the University of Pittsburgh, and then to Yale University, where he was named provost. Throughout his time in academic leadership positions, he has maintained his scholarly work, including an active research laboratory, and will continue to do so at NYU.

A distinguished chemist and a Fellow of the Royal Society, Hamilton’s scholarly work lies at the intersection of organic and biologic chemistry. He earned his PhD from Cambridge University, his master’s degree from the University of British Columbia, and his undergraduate degree from Exeter University.

JOHN S. HAMILTON
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT,
ACQUISITIONS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
PYRAMID HOTEL GROUP

John S. Hamilton is responsible for Pyramid Hotel Group’s new management assignments, acquisitions, and business development. In the past 10 years, Hamilton and his team have underwritten, financed, acquired, and/or taken over management of over 100 hotels with over 40,000 rooms.

Hamilton has years of experience sourcing, evaluating, underwriting, and executing hospitality real estate and management transactions. Previously a licensed CPA, he has been associated with such prominent firms as Lowe Hospitality Group, Promus Hotels, Carnival Hotels & Resorts, Doubletree Hotels, and Laventhol & Horwath. PHG is a third-party hotel and resort management and asset management company providing various services to owners and lenders, such as hotel and resort property management, asset management, receivership, and project management.

DANIEL P. HANSEN
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
SUMMIT HOTEL PROPERTIES

Daniel P. Hansen serves as president and chief executive officer, as well as a member of the board of directors, of Summit Hotel Properties, a publicly traded real estate investment trust. The company’s hotels are branded with Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, IHG, and Starwood. Prior to joining Summit, Hansen spent 11 years with Merrill Lynch in various leadership positions. Hansen was previously the president and chief financial officer of the company’s predecessor after serving as chief development officer. Hansen holds a BA in economics from South Dakota State University and serves on boards and advisory councils for the lodging industry and several hotel brands.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:

GLENN HAUSSMAN
EDITOR AT LARGE
HOTEL MANAGEMENT

Glenn Haussman, president of Rouse Media and editor at large with Questex, is deeply entrenched in all things hospitality. He hosts the weekly on demand radio show No Vacancy and is a frequent keynote speaker and sought-after lodging trends expert.

Closing in on 20 years in the hospitality industry, Haussman enjoys the worlds of hospitality and travel as an observer, educator, and of course, as a guest. He is well known for his lightning rod viewpoints on controversial lodging industry issues.

As a frequent moderator and speaker, he uses a unique motivational style and viewpoint to get people to reassess conventional thinking to find empowerment in their careers and businesses. His weekly radio show-style podcast attracts the biggest names in hospitality as guests and was just selected as a top podcast by USA Today to listen to while traveling.

Haussman also has served as an adjunct professor at the NYU School of Professional Studies, teaching classes in public relations and advertising and consumer behavior at the Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism, and he is frequently quoted in leading publications such as The New York Times, USA Today, Washington Post, MSNBC.com, CNN.com, Chicago Tribune, and many more. Find Haussman on Twitter at @TravelingGlenn.

SEAN HENNESSEY
CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
NYU SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES TISCH CENTER FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Sean Hennessey has taught hospitality accounting, finance, and development courses at the NYU School of Professional Studies for over 20 years. He also is a principal with Lodging Advisors, a firm he founded in 2004. Hennessey began his career in daily operations with companies such as Marriott, Walt Disney World, and numerous restaurants. Hennessey is the 2016 co-chair of the Lodging Industry World, and numerous restaurants. Hennessey has been involved in over $75 billion of real estate investments across all property types. Notable transactions include the acquisition of the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Motel 6, and finance.

KATE B. HENRIKSEN
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF INVESTMENT AND PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS
RLJ LODGING TRUST

Kate B. Henriksen, a veteran RLJ executive, is senior vice president of investment and portfolio analysis. She is responsible for managing the underwriting process on RLJ’s potential hotel investments and for asset managing the portfolio on a strategic level. Prior to RLJ going public, she also oversaw portfolio management and her responsibilities included tracking the performance of the company’s investment portfolios, assisting with capital raising efforts, and managing relationships with investors in RLJ’s investment funds. Henriksen also served as vice president of investment analysis, where she was primarily responsible for underwriting and due diligence on potential hotel investments. Since joining RLJ, Henriksen has overseen the underwriting on completed transactions totaling $5.4 billion. Henriksen also has been actively involved in RLJ’s capital recycling program, marketing for sale nearly $2 billion in sold assets.

Prior to joining RLJ in 2002, Henriksen served as a director of development planning and feasibility at Marriott International. Henriksen’s experience also includes consulting on and appraising over $4 billion in existing and proposed lodging facilities for HVS International. Henriksen graduated from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration with a BS with a concentration in real estate and property asset management. Henriksen also serves as an advisory board member for Cornell University’s Center for Real Estate and Finance.

TYLER HENRITZE
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CO-HEAD OF US ACQUISITIONS
BLACKSTONE

Tyler Henritze is a senior managing director in the real estate group and the co-head of US acquisitions based in New York. Since joining Blackstone in 2004, Henritze has been involved in over $75 billion of real estate investments across all property types. Notable transactions include the acquisition of the Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Motel 6, Extended Stay Hotels, Equity Office Properties, CarrAmerica, LaQuinta, and Wyndham International.

Henritze currently serves as a board member of The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas, Motel 6, and BRE Select Hotel Corp, and is a former board member of Hilton Worldwide and La Quinta. Before joining Blackstone, Henritze worked at Merrill Lynch, where he was an analyst in the real estate investment banking group.

Henritze earned a BS in commerce from The McIntire School at the University of Virginia where he graduated with distinction. He also helped found and serves on the investment community board of CityYear New York.
JASON HERTHEL
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
MONTAGE HOTELS & RESORTS

Jason Herthel is president and chief operating officer of Montage Hotels & Resorts, and is responsible for all aspects of operations management, business development, and real estate development.

Herthel has primary oversight of Montage’s experienced team of hospitality professionals in the departments of operations, sales and marketing, legal, residential, golf, and acquisitions and development, and he works with them to achieve business goals and deliver on the exceptional culture of service for which Montage has become renowned.

Herthel joined Montage in 2011 as the executive vice president of acquisitions, development, and strategy. He was promoted in 2015 to be the first president and chief operating officer of the luxury hotel management company.

Prior to joining the company in 2011, Herthel held the position of senior vice president of project development for Viceroy Hotel Group, a position which was based in the company’s Abu Dhabi corporate office. Herthel also worked as principal and general counsel for The Setai Group, where he played an instrumental role in the company’s development of more than 1.2 million square feet of luxury residential and mixed-use hotel and resort properties in South Florida and the Caribbean. Prior to that, Herthel was an attorney at Paul Hastings, where he was a member of the firm’s resort, restaurant, and recreation practice group, specializing in the transactional real estate and business needs of global hospitality clients. In 2002-2003, while an attorney at Paul Hastings, Herthel served as outside counsel to Montage Hotels & Resorts in connection with the development of Montage Laguna Beach.

Herthel holds a Juris Doctor from Harvard Law School, a master’s degree in public administration from Harvard University’s John F. Kennedy School of Government, and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Stanford University.

ROGER HILL
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
THE GETTYS GROUP

Roger Hill’s expertise and influence have helped place The Gettys Group among the most recognized and published firms in the hospitality design industry. With expertise in design, procurement, branding, and consulting and with offices in six locations around the globe, The Gettys Group is able to help any client, in any location, with their project needs.

A vanguard of the philosophy “beautiful design is good business,” Hill has led this innovative and award-winning global firm through nearly three decades of growth. The aforementioned combined with his outstanding achievements have earned him Hospitality Design magazine’s prestigious Platinum Circle Award, an honor widely recognized for praising exceptional achievement in the hospitality design industry. He holds a Bachelor of Science in hotel administration from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration and is active in many civil organizations.

AMANDA HITE
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
STR

Amanda Hite is the president and chief operating officer of STR, the recognized leader for hotel performance data since 1985. STR provides a single source for global hotel data covering daily and monthly performance, forecasts, annual profitability, pipeline, and census information. STR founded the STR family of companies: STR Global, STR Analytics, Hotel News Now, and the Hotel Data Conference. As president and chief operating officer, Hite sets company policy and direction while overseeing daily operations. In addition, she coordinates initiatives and implementation for STR’s family of companies: Hotel News Now, based in Cleveland, Ohio; STR Analytics based in Boulder, Colorado; and STR Global based in London, United Kingdom. She also serves as chairman of the board for STR Global.

Hite is a member of the board of directors of the US Travel Association. She also serves as a member of the industry advisory board of the Penn State School of Hospitality Management. Prior to joining STR, Hite was the director of research for the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. She is a graduate of Birmingham-Southern College with a BS in business administration.

JEFF HIGLEY
VICE PRESIDENT/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR
STR/HOTEL NEWS NOW

Jeff Higley is vice president, digital media and communications, and editorial director at Hotel News Now. Higley is a 26-year journalism veteran who has specialized in the hotel industry for the past 16 years. He launched HotelNewsNow.com, a division of Smith Travel Research, in September 2008. Prior to joining HotelNewsNow.com and STR in March 2008, Higley served in various leadership positions for Questex Media Group’s hotel group, including Hotel & Motel Management and Hotel Design magazines. Higley began his career in the newspaper industry and worked as a sportswriter for several medium-sized Midwest newspapers, covering the gamut from high school basketball to professional championship games.
EDWARD HOGANSON
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
AR-GLOBAL HOSPITALITY TRUST

As chief financial officer at AR-Global Hospitality Trust, Edward Hoganson oversees the firm’s finance, accounting, and asset management teams. AR-Global Hospitality owns over 130 hotels located across the country, branded predominately by Marriott, Hilton, and Hyatt. The REIT has over $1 billion of debt and has been active in the debt markets—funding acquisitions and refinancing loans.

AR-Global Hospitality is a public non-traded REIT with an enterprise value over $2 billion. Since Hoganson joined the REIT in 2014, he has been deeply involved with the firm’s acquisitions and financings. Previously, Hoganson was CFO of Crestline Hotels & Resorts, a leading third-party management company, and earlier he headed up asset management for Highland Hospitality. Hoganson has more than 20 years of hospitality industry experience. He began his career with Deloitte and then joined Marriott International where he held various finance positions.

Hoganson earned his undergraduate degree from Yale University and his MBA from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania. He also holds a master’s degree in international relations from the University of Pennsylvania. When he’s not talking with hotel owners, Hoganson can be found teaching hospitality finance at George Mason University.

MARK S. HOPLAMAZIAN
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

Mark S. Hoplamazian was appointed to the board of directors in November 2006 and named president and chief executive officer of Hyatt Hotels Corporation in December 2006. Prior to being appointed to his present position, Hoplamazian served as president of The Pritzker Organization (TPO), the principal financial and investment adviser for Pritzker family business interests. During his 17-year tenure with TPO, he served as adviser to various Pritzker family-owned companies, including Hyatt Hotels Corporation and its predecessors. He previously worked in international mergers and acquisitions at the First Boston Corporation in New York City. Hoplamazian was appointed to the VF Corporation board of directors in February 2015, and serves on the advisory board of Facing History and Ourselves, the Chicago Booth Council for on the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, the executive committee of the board of directors of World Business Chicago, and the board of trustees of the Aspen Institute and of the Latin School of Chicago. Hoplamazian is a member of the World Travel & Tourism Council and the Commercial Club of Chicago. He also is a member of the Discovery Class of the Henry Crown Fellowship.

JIM HOLTHOUSER
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL BRANDS
HILTON WORLDWIDE

Jim Holthouser is Hilton Worldwide executive vice president of global brands. In this role, he serves as the company global leader for brand management and customer marketing across 12 consumer brands for more than 4,500 hotels, including Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts, Conrad Hotels & Resorts, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, DoubleTree by Hilton, Embassy Suites Hotels, Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton by Hilton, Homewood Suites by Hilton, Home2 Suites by Hilton, The Curio Collection by Hilton, Canopy by Hilton, and Tru by Hilton.

Holthouser also oversees the product disciplines that support these hotels. The product management group is responsible for the development and management of products for food and beverage, meetings and events, spa, fitness, guest technology, and sustainability. The global brands strategy group is responsible for developing strategies for all brand and product groups across the enterprise.

With more than 25 years of experience in the lodging, restaurant, and gaming industries, Holthouser has held a series of senior management positions within Hilton Worldwide in the branding, franchising, and marketing arenas. Most recently, he was global head of full-service brands and global head of Embassy Suites Hotels, overseeing all aspects of brand management including marketing and public relations, sales, revenue management, research and development, and franchise owner relations. Previously, Holthouser served as senior vice president of brand management for Homewood Suites by Hilton. His career with the company began in 1979 as the director of market research for Promus.

Holthouser earned his MA in political economy from the University of Louisville and his International MBA from the American Graduate School of International Management. He is fluent in German and has a strong working knowledge of French.

TREVOR HORWELL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
NOBU HOSPITALITY GROUP

Trevor Horwell has been chief executive officer of Nobu Hospitality Group since 2009. Prior to this, he was global head of hotels for Hard Rock Hotels and Casinos for eight years. Previously, he was CEO of COMO Investment and COMO Hotels and had a distinguished career with Global Hyatt serving as chief financial officer of Europe, vice president of operations, and hotel general manager.

Horwell is a regular keynote speaker at many hotel industry forums both in the United States and internationally. Horwell has been instrumental in evolving the luxury lifestyle hotel, restaurant, and residential concept throughout North America, Europe, the Middle East, and Asia.
JEFFREY A. HORWITZ
CORPORATE PARTNER,
HEAD OF LODGING & GAMING PRACTICE,
AND CO-HEAD OF PRIVATE EQUITY REAL ESTATE GROUP
PROSKAUER

Jeffrey A. Horwitz is a corporate partner who heads the lodging and gaming practice, and co-heads the private equity real estate group at Proskauer. He has been active in the hospitality space for 30 years, handling virtually every type of transaction involving hotels, from single-property deals to sales of entire chains. Horwitz has worked on some of the largest transactions in the lodging space in recent years, including Accor’s sale of Motel 6 to Blackstone and the acquisition of more than $3 billion in hotel properties in the past several years. Horwitz regularly counsels sovereign wealth funds, private equity funds, developers, and major financial institutions. He is a member of the advisory board of the Cornell Center for Real Estate Finance, is a founder and director of the New York Hospitality Council, and teaches at Cornell University and New York University. He is regularly rated in Chambers and Best Lawyers. Horwitz is a graduate of Harvard College and the University of Virginia School of Law.

JACKSON HSIEH
VICE CHAIRMAN, INVESTMENT BANKING
MORGAN STANLEY

Jackson Hsieh rejoined Morgan Stanley in September 2013, focusing primarily on client coverage of the firm’s real estate and lodging clients. Since his return to Morgan Stanley, he has already completed the sale of Dolce Hotels & Resorts, a $11 billion sale of hotels from Inland American REIT, a $3.5 billion spin-off of Xenia Hotels & Resorts from Inland American REIT, and the pending $2.9 billion sale of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts to Accor. Prior to Morgan Stanley, Hsieh was joint global head of the real estate, lodging, and leisure group at UBS. He has led transaction teams that have completed over $145 billion in M&A transactions, including the $37 billion restructuring of General Growth Properties, the $25.8 billion sale of Hilton Hotels Corporation, the $11 billion sale of Caesars Entertainment, the $6.6 billion sale of CNL Hotels & Resorts, the $5.7 billion acquisition of Hilton Group’s hotel division by Hilton Hotels Corporation, and the $3.9 billion sale of Fairmont Hotel & Resorts.

Hsieh is currently on the board of trustees of the University of California, Berkeley Foundation and vice chairman of the CAL Metro committee in New York. He is the former co-chairman of the Industry Real Estate Financing Advisory Council (IREFAC) and a recipient of the IREFAC Chairman’s Award. He also has received the Jack A. Shaffer Financial Adviser of the Year Award. Hsieh is a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley and earned his master’s degree from Harvard University.

AMY HULBERT
MANAGING DIRECTOR OF DESIGN
BEST WESTERN HOTELS & RESORTS

A 20-year veteran of the hospitality design industry, Amy Hulbert is at the helm of the design department for Best Western Hotels & Resorts and is spearheading the design of the brand’s new boutique concept Vīb, and newest broad mid-scale brand addition, GLō. The new initiative provides an unparalleled opportunity in design at Best Western. In addition, Hulbert’s team has rolled out new prototypes to update and contemporize the BEST WESTERN, BEST WESTERN PLUS, and BEST WESTERN PREMIER brands and enhance the offerings both to guests and developers.

Hulbert began her career in hospitality interior design at The Gettys Group in Chicago, Illinois, specializing in hospitality interiors for the firm. In 1998, Hulbert joined Hilton Hotels Corporation and was an integral part of the design team at Hilton for 11 years, most recently covering the Latin America and Caribbean territory for all 10 of Hilton’s brands. Hulbert earned her degree in interior design from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

TEAGUE HUNTER
PRESIDENT
HUNTER HOTEL ADVISORS

Teague Hunter is president of Hunter Hotel Advisors, one of the nation’s leading hotel brokerage companies. Under Hunter’s leadership, the firm has expanded from a regional brokerage firm into one of the nation’s premier providers of hotel investment advisory services, with six national offices. During his 15-year hotel brokerage career, he has closed more than $1 billion in hotel transactions, and has listed properties for the industry’s most influential financial institutions, including RLJ, Goldman Sachs, Blackstone, Apple, Deutsche Bank, and Summit Hotels. Hunter’s career has evolved from selling individual assets to selling hotel portfolios and companies. He attributes this impressive track record to his personal relationships with key industry leaders. He is highly regarded for his in-depth understanding of hotel real estate investments, and has been a popular guest speaker and industry expert at hotel conferences nationwide.

@nyuhospitality
HOWARD B. ISAACSON

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, ASSET MANAGEMENT
RLJ LODGING TRUST

Howard B. Isaacson is responsible for all asset management and risk management at RLJ Lodging Trust. Prior to joining RLJ, Isaacson was the vice president of finance for HEI Hospitality. From 1993 to 2001, Isaacson held several positions with MeriStar Hotels & Resorts. From 1999 through 2001, he was the executive vice president of the Doral Golf division of MeriStar, which generated annual revenues of approximately $19 million. Prior to the CapStar Hotel Company merger with American General to form MeriStar and prior to CapStar Hotels going public in 1996, Isaacson served as CapStar Hotels’ chief financial officer, overseeing the financial activities of a 46-hotel company that generated approximately $160 million in revenue.

Isaacson has over 35 years of experience in the hospitality industry that includes positions with Universal Hotels and Holiday Inns. Isaacson was elected as the international president of Hospitality Financial and Technology Professionals in 1995 and co-authored the Uniform System of Accounts for the Lodging Industry, ninth edition. Isaacson currently sits on the board of the Hospitality Asset Managers Association. He earned a BS in business administration from Elizabethtown College and is a certified public accountant.

KEVIN J. JACOBS

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
HILTON WORLDWIDE

Kevin J. Jacobs is executive vice president and chief financial officer for Hilton Worldwide. He oversees the company’s global finance functions, as well as its global information technology function, and all real estate and asset management aspects of its portfolio of nearly 150 owned, leased, and joint ventured hotels. He joined Hilton in 2008 as senior vice president of corporate strategy, was elected treasurer in 2009, and was appointed executive vice president and chief of staff in 2012.

Prior to Hilton Worldwide, Jacobs was senior vice president of mergers and acquisitions and treasurer of Fairmont Raffles Hotels International. In this role, Jacobs was responsible for sourcing, evaluating, and executing on potential mergers, acquisitions, or other strategic corporate transactions, and leading the company’s corporate strategic and business planning efforts. As treasurer, he oversaw the company’s corporate finance and treasury activities globally.

Prior to Fairmont Raffles, Jacobs spent seven years with Host Hotels & Resorts, most recently as vice president of corporate finance and investor relations, where he led the company’s strategic planning and investor relations functions. Jacobs has held various roles in the hospitality consulting practice of PricewaterhouseCoopers and the hospitality valuation group at Cushman & Wakefield.

STEPHEN M. JENNINGS

PRINCIPAL AND US LEADER FOR HOSPITALITY DELLOITE

Stephen M. Jennings is a principal of Monitor Deloitte Consulting. He is the hotel and resorts leader for Deloitte’s US travel, hospitality, and leisure practice. Prior to joining Deloitte, Jennings was the managing partner and a member of the board of directors of Monitor’s global professional services practices.

In nearly 30 years of consulting, Jennings has managed domestic and international projects and relationships in a wide variety of industries including financial services, consumer products, industrials, healthcare, life sciences, technology and travel, hospitality, and leisure. Jennings has often served as the senior adviser to executive teams of companies tackling their most challenging issues, including corporate strategy, M&A, organizational transformation, marketing and sales optimization, loyalty, SGA cost reduction, global growth, and innovation. Representative clients include American Express, Analog Devices, Anglo American, Brinks, Becton Dickinson, CVS Caremark, Henry Schein, Hertz, Hilton, Hyatt, Intercontinental Hotels, Koch Industries, Mandarin Oriental, Marriott, Merck, and Starwood.

Jennings received a BA Oxon from Oxford University, where he studied philosophy, politics, and economics. He earned his undergraduate BA at Dartmouth College in economics. He is currently a member of the board of directors of New Profit and a trustee of the Rivers School.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:

CHRISTOPHER J. JORDAN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
WELLS FARGO COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

Christopher J. Jordan is an executive vice president and group head of Wells Fargo Commercial Real Estate’s hospitality finance group, which provides debt products and financial services to leading hotel owners throughout the United States. The group’s clients include private owner/operators, institutional real estate funds dedicated to hospitality, public hotel REITs, and real estate operating companies. Based in Washington, DC, Jordan oversees all lending and operations for the group, which has offices in Los Angeles; San Francisco; Washington, DC; Charlotte, North Carolina; Chicago; Boston; and New York.

During his 27-year Wells Fargo career, Jordan has been involved with various commercial real estate business lines. He assumed his current role with the hospitality finance group in July 2008. From 2001 to 2008, he was an executive vice president responsible for all general real estate banking in the Mid-Atlantic and New England regions. From 1998 until 2001, he was a senior vice president and regional manager for the Washington, DC metropolitan region. From 1994 until 1998, he was a member of the real estate capital markets group in San Francisco. He joined Wells Fargo Realty Advisors, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Wells Fargo & Company, in 1988 in the Washington, DC office.

Jordan earned his BA, cum laude, from Duke University’s Trinity School of Arts and Sciences and his MBA from Duke University’s Fuqua School of Business. He is a member of the American Hotel & Lodging Association’s Industry Real Estate Financing Advisory Council (IREFAC) and the Duke University Annual Fund Advisory Board.

NAVEEN P. KAKARLA
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
HHM

Naveen P. Kakarla is the president and chief executive officer and also sits on the board of directors of HHM, formerly known as Hersha Hospitality Management. HHM manages over 115 hotels in the Northeast, Florida, Texas, and California. Kakarla is responsible for HHM’s investment and fund management, acquisitions and development, finance and accounting, human resources, and capital projects. Kakarla previously led the New York City region for HHM and oversaw its construction and technical services division. Prior to joining Hersha in 2005, Kakarla worked with a private equity firm and its portfolio companies on early stage investments and roll-ups in various industries. Kakarla had been an active real estate investor in the multifamily space prior to joining Hersha.

Outside the real estate sector, Kakarla was previously a partner specializing in corporate and securities law at the national law firm of Jenkens & Gilchris, and was previously associated with Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld in Washington, DC. Kakarla earned a Bachelor of Arts from Austin College and a law degree from Cornell Law School.

FERN I. KANTER
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
CHMWARNICK

Fern I. Kanter is a managing director and executive vice president for CHMWarnick, a leading hotel asset management and business advisory firm. Kanter brings over 30 years of industry experience, having consulted on thousands of existing and planned hotel, resort, and hospitality mixed-use projects in the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. She is responsible for operational and investment strategies, and special projects designed to enhance value on CHMW’s asset management portfolio of over 50 hotels valued at $8 billion. Kanter brings extensive acquisition experience, having sourced deals and equity, and led physical, market, and legal due diligence teams for more than 100 properties. She brings expertise in redevelopment, mixed-use planning, highest-and-best-use analyses, and guides repositioning efforts on behalf of owners of some of the world’s most iconic hotels. Kanter is an active member of the Urban Land Institute, District Council Co-Chair of WLI, and participates in the ULI Boston Market Council and ULI National Recreational Development Council.

STEPHEN P. JOYCE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

Stephen P. Joyce is president, chief executive officer, and member of the board of directors of Choice Hotels International. With a career in the lodging industry spanning three decades, Joyce has a proven track record of developing and growing some of the best-known hotel brands worldwide.

Since 2008, he has led the company on an impressive and focused growth strategy, resulting in significant gain in the company’s market share position, expansion into new markets, and advancement of new brands. His leadership has resulted in enhancements to the company’s marketing strategies, brand awareness, and e-commerce initiatives.

A member of the International Franchise Association, Joyce held many leadership roles there, including chairman. He is the former chairman of the US Travel Association and is currently the vice chairman of the board of trustees of the ServiceSource Foundation.
JONATHAN KARL
CHIEF WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT
ABC NEWS

Jonathan Karl was named ABC News’ chief White House correspondent in December 2012. He regularly contributes to all broadcasts, including Good Morning America, World News with Diane Sawyer, and Nightline. In addition, he reports for all of ABC’s digital properties, including the popular political blog “The Note” and hosts a weekly digital show for ABC News/Yahoo! News. A regular contributor to This Week with George Stephanopoulos, Karl also serves as a guest anchor for the program.

Karl has broad experience covering US politics, foreign policy, and the military. His reporting drives news cycles and has been recognized with some of the most prestigious honors in journalism, including the 2011 Joan Shorenstein Barone Award for excellence in Washington-based reporting and an Emmy Award for his coverage of the 2009 Inauguration of President Barack Obama. In 2001 he won the National Press Foundation’s Everett McKinley Dirksen Award, the highest honor for congressional reporting.

Prior to his current post at the White House, Karl served as ABC’s senior political correspondent, covering national political news, including presidential politics and Congress. In 2012, Karl was often on the campaign trail. His well-sourced reporting gave viewers an inside track on the veepstakes as the Romney campaign whittled down its list of candidates.

In his 15 years in Washington, Karl earned a reputation as a fierce government watchdog for his aggressive investigations of government waste. His reporting on congressional junkets led to changes in the rules for the travel costs of members of Congress and their staffs, and his reporting on vacant federal buildings led to a new effort to sell off unused government real estate.

Karl has had news-making interviews with leading figures from the political, international, and entertainment arenas. He joined ABC News in January 2003 as the network’s senior foreign affairs correspondent covering the State Department. He traveled around the world with Secretaries of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice. In 2004 he spent several months on the campaign trail covering the Bush-Cheney campaign, and he also co-anchored election night coverage on ABC News NOW—anchoring for more than 14 straight hours.

In December 2005 Karl was named senior national security correspondent. He has traveled the world for ABC News, reporting from more than two dozen countries on five continents. He reported more extensively on the situation in Darfur, Sudan than any other network correspondent, visiting Sudan three times in 2005. He also broke several stories on Iran’s nuclear program and covered the 2004 presidential elections in Russia. Before joining ABC News, he served as a congressional correspondent for CNN. In his eight years with CNN, he covered Capitol Hill, the White House, and the Pentagon. While there, he reported on two presidential elections, President Clinton’s impeachment, the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia, and congressional reaction to the September 11 terrorist attacks.

Prior to joining CNN, Karl worked as an investigative reporter for the New York Post, covering Rudy Giuliani’s City Hall and the 1994 Cuomo-Pataki gubernatorial race. He also has worked as a researcher and reporter for The New Republic, where he covered a variety of issues ranging from international affairs to American politics to education. Karl graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, where he was editor in chief of The Vassar Spectator.

KEITH KEFGEN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND MANAGING DIRECTOR
AETHOS CONSULTING GROUP

Keith Kefgen brings 30 years of industry experience to his role as chief executive officer of hospitality executive search and advisory global powerhouse AETHOS Consulting Group, specializing in lodging, restaurants, gaming, and private equity counseling. He is a frequent lecturer and prolific author of articles on topics related to executive selection, pay-performance, corporate governance, and executive leadership. Kefgen’s first book, The Loneliness of Leadership, is available on Amazon.

A graduate of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, Kefgen started his career in operations at the Waldorf Astoria and then founded and served as CEO of the executive search division of HVS.

MARK KEISER
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
SH GROUP—BACCARAT HOTELS & 1 HOTELS

Mark Keiser is senior vice president and chief development officer for SH Group. In his position, he is primarily responsible for the growth of the Baccarat Hotels & Resorts and 1 Hotels brands.

Keiser most recently was a leader on Starwood Hotels’ development team for over 10 years and was responsible for its managed and franchised development efforts for the nine brands in the western half of the United States. Prior to that role, Keiser held varying leadership roles including leading Starwood’s luxury development activities across the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean, and Starwood’s real estate investment activities on the East Coast and in the Caribbean. Before joining Starwood’s development team, Keiser gained a diverse range of experiences in the hotel industry working for the financial services firm Bear, Stearns & Co. as well as at the hotel companies Wyndham International and Prime Hospitality.

Keiser holds a BS in hotel administration from Cornell University and is an active member of its young alumni dean’s advisory board and the Recreational Development Council of the Urban Land Institute.
DAVID KIESKE
MANAGING DIRECTOR
EASTDIL SECURED

David Kieske is a managing director in Eastdil Secured / Wells Fargo Securities’ real estate and lodging investment banking group. Kieske joined the Wachovia merger and acquisitions group in 2007, the predecessor firm, where he was responsible for advisory transactions with the firm’s real estate and lodging clients. Kieske has spent over 20 years in real estate, with the focus at Eastdil solely on lodging transactions. His experience includes M&A transactions, initial public offerings, follow-on equity offerings, public debt offerings, mortgage financings, bank loans, and asset and portfolio sales for a wide array of public and private hospitality clients. Kieske earned his MBA from the University of California, Los Angeles and BS from University of California, Davis.

KIRK KINSELL
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
LOEWS HOTELS & RESORTS

Kirk Kinsell brings more than 35 years’ experience in the hospitality industry to his role as president and chief executive officer of Loews Hotels & Resorts and its 25 hotels throughout the United States and Canada. He is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the company’s multibrand platform that includes Loews Hotels & Resorts, a leading brand in the upper-upscale and luxury categories; Loews Regency, within the luxury category; and The OE Collection, a management-based platform to support existing or newly built independent hotels, mostly in the upper-upscale and lifestyle categories.

Prior to joining Loews Hotels, Kinsell spent 19 years with InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) holding multiple leadership positions. Most recently, as president, the Americas, he oversaw the management of more than 3,700 hotels, and was responsible for development and performance of all IHG hotel brands and properties across the region. Kinsell was previously president, Europe, Middle East, and Africa, and served as executive director for IHG. His industry experience also includes ITT Sheraton and the Trammell Crow Hotel Company.

RICK S. KIRKBRIDE
PARTNER
PAUL HASTINGS

Rick S. Kirkbride represents real estate development companies, institutional lenders, investment banks, opportunity funds, and other capital providers, owners, and operators. His practice encompasses the development, acquisition, sale, finance, leasing, operation, licensing, roll-up, foreclosure, workout, and restructuring of hotels, condo-hotels, resorts, branded condominiums, private residence clubs and timeshare projects, spas, restaurants, casinos, golf courses, tennis stadiums, theme parks, and other hospitality-based entertainment properties and businesses in North America, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Kirkbride is an adjunct professor at Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. He repeatedly has been named one of only three lawyers within “Band 1” of the list of “Leaders in Their Field” for the leisure and hospitality category in Chambers USA and one of the “Top 100 Lawyers in the State of California” by the Los Angeles Daily Journal and San Francisco Daily Journal. He is a member of ULI and is immediate past chair (and currently vice chair at large) of its Hotel Development Council. He also is on the hospitality editorial board of Law 360 and is a former member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants. He speaks on various hospitality topics at seminars and conferences throughout the world. He was the founder and chair of the UCLA Real Estate Finance and Restaurant Conference.
MICHAEL KLINGHER
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR
WESTMONT HOSPITALITY

Michael Klingher has more than 30 years’ experience in the real estate industry. He spent more than 20 years at Goldman Sachs, first as a real estate investment banker, and later as a managing director in the real estate principal investment area. He has investment expertise in most commercial property types, with a special focus on operationally intensive real estate, such as hospitality, senior housing, corporate housing, and such diverse sectors as marinas and parking. Klingher’s experience includes investments in the United States, Canada, and Europe.

Klingher has been investing with Westmont since 1995 and has been a member of the senior investment team at the company since 2006. At Westmont, he has been responsible for co-sponsoring and managing the Westbridge Hospitality Fund and overseeing a number of large transactions, including the purchase of Red Roof Inns, InTown Suites, Crossland Extended Stay, and a number of significant individual hospitality assets.

Klingher holds a Bachelor of Arts from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, for which he serves as trustee emeritus, and he earned a Juris Doctorate and Master of Business Administration from Harvard University.

DAVID KONG
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
BEST WESTERN HOTELS & RESORTS

David Kong is a hospitality industry leader with deep experience in the industry. Since being named president and chief executive officer of Best Western Hotels & Resorts in 2004, Kong has led the company to its highest RevPAR Index of 110 the past four years as well as unprecedented performance in guest loyalty and hotel satisfaction. Best Western has over 4,000 hotels in over 100 countries with annual hotel revenue close to $7 billion.

Under Kong’s leadership, Best Western has won more awards than any other hotel brand. Recent awards include Best Western Plus being named the best upper midscale hotel by Business Travel News in 2014 and 2015, Compuware naming bestwestern.com the best hotel website for the past four years, and winning 50 HSMAI Adrian Awards in 2015.

Kong has received many prestigious awards including the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International and the Stephen W. Brener Silver Plate Award for his contributions to the resurgence of Best Western and services to the industry.

LAWRENCE J. KREMA
MANAGING DIRECTOR
FERGUSON PARTNERS

Lawrence J. Krema serves as a managing director at Ferguson Partners. He was most recently the global senior vice president of human resources and corporate operations for Simon Property Group, a leader in retail real estate ownership, management, and development and a S&P 100 company. Simon’s industry-leading retail properties and investments across North America, Europe, and Asia provide shopping experiences for millions of consumers every day and generate billions in annual retail sales.

Previously, Krema was executive vice president of human resources for Equity Office Properties Trust, a Fortune 500 commercial real estate company. Krema’s career also includes previous leadership positions with The Limited and Macy’s Department Stores. He also has been active in various industry and professional organizations, including the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts (NAREIT) and International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC). Krema earned a Bachelor of Science from St. Mary’s University in San Antonio, Texas.

LARRY KWON
MANAGING DIRECTOR
MOELIS & COMPANY

Larry Kwon is a managing director at Moelis & Company. Kwon has over 14 years of investment banking and advisory experience and is primarily focused on advising clients in the real estate, gaming, lodging, and leisure industries on a wide variety of corporate finance matters including mergers and acquisitions, recapitalizations and restructurings, and debt and equity capital raisings. Kwon has advised clients in both domestic US transactions, as well as numerous cross-border transactions involving parties in Asia, Canada, Mexico, and the Middle East. Prior to joining Moelis & Company, Kwon was a member of the recapitalization and restructuring group at Jefferies & Company and a management consultant at Accenture.
KRISTIN LAMOUREUX, PhD
ASSOCIATE DEAN AND CLINICAL ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
NYU SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES TISCH CENTER
FOR HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

Kristin Lamoureux has been a leader in the area of professional and academic education for almost 20 years. Most recently, she was the executive director of the International Institute of Tourism Studies (IITS) and a research professor of business and tourism studies at The George Washington University School of Business. Under her leadership, IITS has grown to be known as one of the most significant tourism research centers in the world.

Lamoureux is involved in many projects focusing on tourism in developed and developing countries and with indigenous populations around the world, including in the United States, Jordan, Honduras, Belize, Egypt, Mali, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Bulgaria, and Spain. She also has served as a consultant for the US Department of Interior, National Park Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs, USAID, World Bank, UN World Tourism Organization, US Environmental Protection Agency, Ecotourism Society, and Conservation International.

Lamoureux's primary focus areas include economic development, tourism workforce development, capacity building, sustainable tourism, culture-heritage tourism, volunteer tourism, accreditation, destination management, public-private partnerships, and rural and/or tribal community tourism development. She is active in the professional hospitality and tourism community, having served on several advisory boards, including for the Destination Marketing Association International’s Destination Marketing Accreditation Program and the Sustainable Tourism International Board of Regents’ Educational Programs. She also serves as an adviser to the Adventure Travel Trade Association and American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association.

Lamoureux received a BS from Johnson and Wales University in Rhode Island, as well as an MTA (Master of Tourism Administration) and a PhD in business administration with a focus on strategic management and tourism from The George Washington University in Washington, DC.

JONATHAN LANGER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NORTHSTAR REALTY FINANCE CORP.

Jonathan Langer is the chief executive officer of NorthStar Realty Finance Corp., a NYSE-listed diversified equity REIT. From 1994 to 2010, Langer was employed at Goldman, Sachs & Co., where he primarily worked as a partner in its Real Estate Principal Investment Area (REPIA), which, among other activities, oversaw the Whitehall series of funds. Langer’s responsibilities at Goldman, Sachs & Co. included overseeing REPIA’s North American real estate and global lodging investment efforts. During his tenure at Goldman, Sachs & Co., Langer also served on the boards of various companies, such as Icon Parking and Westin Hotels and Resorts. Following his employment at Goldman, Sachs & Co., Langer joined Bain Capital, where he worked in private equity, investing for its North American region during 2010 and 2011, and subsequently formed his own investment firm. Langer has previously served as a member of the board of directors of Kerzner International Resorts, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Strategic Hotel Hotels & Resorts, and Morgans Hotel Group. Langer holds a Bachelor of Science in economics from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

GUY LANGFORD
VICE CHAIRMAN, US THL LEADER
DELOITTE

Guy Langford is vice chairman, US leader of the travel, hospitality, and leisure (THL) sector at Deloitte. In his leadership role, Langford regularly exchanges ideas and discusses emerging issues with client service teams serving the travel, hospitality, gaming, restaurants, and sports industries, in order to share insights and best practices. Langford has extensive experience in advising both financial sponsors and corporate clients on due diligence, accounting structuring matters, financial, and operating aspects of transactions for various segments of the industry, including world-class hotels, restaurants, and foodservice companies. Langford is a frequent presenter at various travel, hospitality and leisure, and real estate conferences and summits, and has been published in both television and print media. Based in New York since 1997, Langford is a leader within Deloitte’s M&A transaction services practice. He is both a chartered accountant in Australia and a licensed CPA in Illinois and New York.
MARK LANSPA
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT
WELLS FARGO BANK

Mark Lanspa is an executive vice president with Wells Fargo Commercial Real Estate’s hospitality finance group, where he is responsible for clients based in New York City and London. As one of the nation’s leaders in the real estate industry, Wells Fargo Commercial Real Estate provides a comprehensive platform of financial products and services to regional and national owners, operators and developers, real estate funds, and real estate investment trusts. The hospitality finance group provides debt products and financial services to leading public and private hotel companies and owners throughout the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada. The group’s customers include well-capitalized private owners and operators, institutional real estate funds dedicated to hospitality, hotel REITs, and real estate operating companies.

Lanspa has more than 25 years of real estate finance experience and joined Wells Fargo in 2012. Previously, he was a managing director at Credit Suisse; was a principal at Oasis Real Estate Partners, a real estate debt advisory firm; and held positions at Goldman Sachs and GE Capital. Lanspa is active in numerous professional and community organizations, such as the Urban Land Institute and Student Sponsor Partners. He currently serves on the boards of the Real Estate Lenders Association, where he is a past president, and God’s Love We Deliver, where he serves as a board member and treasurer. He also is a member of the alumni council of Mount Michael Benedictine High School in Elkhorn, Nebraska. Lanspa earned a BS in accounting from Georgetown University and an MBA from Columbia University.

COLLIN LAVERY
PRESIDENT
CUBA EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

Collin Laverty is president of Cuba Educational Travel, a company that offers curated travel to the island for bar associations, business groups, companies, think tanks, trade groups, and universities. He also is a senior partner at Havana Strategies, a boutique consultancy offering assistance in market research, media strategy, government affairs, regulatory guidance, brand recognition, and operational support to US companies operating in Cuba or hoping to enter the Cuban market.

Considered a leading Cuba expert, Laverty has a decade of experience working on Cuba policy and business issues. He initially worked at the Center for Democracy in Americas (CDA), a Washington, DC-based policy advocacy group focused on improving relations between Washington and Havana. As director of the Cuba program at CDA, he led dozens of members of Congress to Cuba on fact-finding visits and oversaw numerous Cuba-related studies and publications.

Laverty is the author of Cuba’s New Resolve: Economic Reform, and Implications for US Policy and has been published and quoted extensively by the Associated Press, Miami Herald, New York Times, Reuters, Wall Street Journal, and a number of other media outlets. He holds a Master of International Affairs from the international relations and pacific studies program at University of California, San Diego.

BEN LEAHY
MANAGING DIRECTOR,
HEAD OF LODGING GROUP INVESTMENT BANKING
GOLDMAN, SACHS & CO.

Ben Leahy is managing director and head of the lodging group in the investment banking division of Goldman, Sachs & Co. He is active in strategic advisory transactions and capital-raising activities for companies in the lodging, ski, and golf sectors. He joined Goldman Sachs in 2006 in San Francisco and moved to New York in 2008. He became a vice president in 2006 and was named managing director in 2008.

Prior to joining the firm, Leahy was a principal at Bank of America Securities in the real estate investment banking group. He also worked as a consultant for Wharton Econometric Forecasting Associates. He earned a BA in history from Georgetown University.

STEPHEN R. LEDOUX
PARTNER AND CO-CHAIR HOTEL GROUP
DAVIS WRIGHT TREMAINE

Stephen R. Ledoux is a partner at Davis Wright Tremaine and co-chair of the firm’s hotel industry group. Since 1989, his practice has focused on hotel acquisition, development, construction, leasing, operations, and franchising. His passion is solving regulatory, political, relational, and financial challenges required to create places of distinction. Ledoux helps clients, including international investors, structure and close equity and debt financing, obtain project approvals, and maximize public-private participation.

Ledoux’s representative experience includes Cavallo Point—The Lodge at the Golden Gate in Sausalito, a LEED-certified luxury resort developed through a private/public/nonprofit alliance with the National Park Service and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy to restore, enhance, and preserve Fort Baker; The Clement Hotel, a “Six Star Experience in Silicon Valley” providing all-inclusive luxury, concierge services, and privacy in a luxurious residential environment; and ongoing projects adjacent to national parks or exotic destinations, with elements of environmental protection, cultural enhancements, education, and performance.
WILLIAM LEE
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF NORTH AMERICA ECONOMICS CITI RESEARCH

William “Bill” Lee is a managing director and head of North America economics at Citi Research. Lee’s specific responsibilities focus on US and global economic and financial issues and developments most relevant to Citi’s global businesses and clients.

Before joining Citi in 2011, Lee was an economist with the Federal Reserve Board in Washington, DC. He later moved to the New York Fed as senior economist and division chief. For the last 18 years prior to Citi, Lee was deputy division chief at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) where he established its Hong Kong office and was resident representative. Lee’s country work included mission chief for Singapore and senior desk and deputy division chief covering the United States and Germany. He also was a deputy division chief responsible for the IMF’s flagship publication on global financial stability. Lee earned a Bachelor of Science in operations research and PhD in economics, both from Columbia University.

NIKI LEONDAKIS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER COMMUNE HOTELS + RESORTS

Niki Leondakis, chief executive officer, joined Commune Hotels + Resorts in 2012 to lead the global expansion for the Commune brands. Prior to Commune, Leondakis led Kimpton Hotels and Restaurants as their president and chief operating officer, where she started in 1993.

Leondakis has numerous industry awards, cited in 2015 by the San Francisco Business Times as one of the Bay Area’s Most Admired CEOs. A recipient of the Leadership Excellence Award by HR.com and LEAD2016, Leondakis has been named one of the “100 Most Influential Women” by the San Francisco Business Times and has been recognized as one of the “Most Powerful Women in Travel” by Travel Agent magazine.

Tempering business with community stewardship, Leondakis serves as a board member of Dress for Success Worldwide, an international nonprofit that promotes the economic independence of disadvantage women, for which she chairs the strategic planning committee. She also was chair of its board from 2009 to 2011.

MICHAEL A. LEVEN
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER GEORGIA AQUARIUM

Michael A. Leven is the chairman and chief executive officer of Georgia Aquarium. He previously served as the CEO of the Aquarium from 2008 to 2009 before leaving for an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to lead Las Vegas Sands Corporation as president and chief operating officer. He also served as its secretary since June 2010.

Leven also has served as the vice chairman of the Marcus Foundation, a philanthropic organization founded by Bernie Marcus, co-founder of The Home Depot. He was previously the chairman and chief executive officer of US Franchise Systems (USFS), which franchises the Microtel Inn & Suites and Hawthorn Suites hotel brands. Prior to forming USFS in 1995, he was president and chief operating officer of Holiday Inn Worldwide. During his five-year tenure, Leven oversaw the launch and significant growth of the new Holiday Inn Express brand. From 1985 to 1990, Leven was president of Days Inn of America. He led the company through a reorganization resulting in significant growth from a regional chain to one of the largest brands in the world. Leven is a co-founder of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association, which now has over 7,000 members. He serves on the boards of The Marcus Institute and Georgia Aquarium.

Leven holds a Bachelor of Arts from Tufts University and a Master of Science from Boston University. He also holds an Honorary Doctorate from Johnson & Wales University and the College of Hospitality and Tourism Management of Niagara University.
STEVEN L. LICHTENFELD
CORPORATE PARTNER, REAL ESTATE CAPITAL MARKETS AND REAL ESTATE FINANCE GROUPS
PROSKAUER

Steven L. Lichtenfeld is a corporate partner of real estate capital markets and real estate finance groups, and a member of the lodging and gaming and private equity real estate groups at Proskauer. He regularly advises real estate funds, institutional lenders, specialty lenders, hedge funds, REITs, and investment banks regarding public offerings and private placements of real estate equity and debt securities, real estate mergers and acquisitions, and real estate senior and mezzanine financings. Lichtenfeld has been widely recognized as a driving force in the real estate capital markets and finance space during the past quarter-century and has garnered several prestigious accolades in this area, including being named as one of The Best Lawyers in America for 2012–2014 in the area of corporate real estate, and during the past five years, has received coveted “Second Tier” rankings from Chambers USA, which has described him as “a strong advocate who will leave no stone unturned.” Chambers has noted that, based upon commentary to its editors from clients, Lichtenfeld was “lauded for his hard working and detailed approach” in handling a broad spectrum of public and private debt offerings, securities, M&A, and other corporate real estate matters and is considered “an expert on all matters related to real estate finance and capital markets.”

Linneman’s long and ongoing business career is highlighted by his roles as founding principal of Linneman Associates, a leading real estate advisory firm; CEO of American Land Funds; and CEO of KL Realty. For more than 35 years, he has advised leading corporations and served on over 20 public and private boards, including serving as chairman of Rockefeller Center Properties, where he led the successful restructuring and sale of Rockefeller Center in the mid-1990s.

Although retired from Wharton’s faculty, Linneman continues his commitment to education through his “Save A Mind, Give A Choice” educational charity for orphans and children of extreme poverty in rural Kenya.

ANNE R. LLOYD-JONES
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR
HVS

Anne R. Lloyd-Jones, CRE, is senior managing director of the New York office of HVS, a premiere global hospitality consulting firm. Since 1980, HVS has provided various consulting services for over 20,000 hotels worldwide. HVS operates out of over 25 offices in 12 countries. Since joining HVS in 1982, Lloyd-Jones has provided consulting and appraisal services to over 5,000 hotels. She is responsible for the sale, supervision, and administration of over 200 appraisal and consulting assignments annually. Her particular areas of expertise include market studies, feasibility analysis, and appraisals. She also is an expert in the field of the valuation of management companies, franchise companies, and brands; the negotiation and valuation of management contracts; spas; and conference centers. She has appeared as an expert witness on numerous occasions, providing testimony and litigation support on matters involving bankruptcy proceedings, civil litigation, and arbitration. Lloyd-Jones holds the CRE designation from the Counselors of Real Estate, is a member of the board of trustees of the Pelham Public Library, and serves on the vestry at Christ Church in Pelham Manor, New York. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Swarthmore College and a Master of Professional Studies from the School of Hotel Administration at Cornell University.

PETER LINNEMAN
PROFESSOR EMERITUS, THE WHARTON SCHOOL, THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA; PRINCIPAL LINNEMAN ASSOCIATES

For nearly 40 years, Peter Linneman’s unique blend of scholarly rigor and practical business insight have won him accolades from around the world, including PREA’s prestigious Graaskamp Award for Real Estate Research, The Wharton School’s Zell-Lurie Real Estate Center’s Lifetime Achievement Award, Realty Stock Magazine’s Special Achievement Award, being named “One of the 25 Most Influential People in Real Estate” by Realtor magazine, and inclusion in The New York Observer’s “100 Most Powerful People in New York Real Estate.”

After earning both his master’s degree and doctorate in economics under the tutelage of Nobel Prize winners Milton Friedman, Gary Becker, George Stigler, Ted Schultz, and Jim Heckman, Linneman had a distinguished academic career at both The University of Chicago and The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. For 33 years, he was a leading member of Wharton’s faculty, serving as the Albert Sussman Professor of Real Estate and professor of finance and public policy, as well as the founding chairman of the real estate department and director of the prestigious Zell-Lurie Real Estate Center. During this time he was co-editor of The Wharton Real Estate Review, and published over 80 scholarly articles, three editions of the acclaimed book Real Estate Finance and Investments: Risks and Opportunities, and the widely read Linneman Letter quarterly report.
JOSEPH D. LONG
MANAGING PARTNER
KHP CAPITAL PARTNERS

Joseph D. Long is a managing partner of KHP Capital Partners with direct responsibility for acquisitions, property development and redevelopment, and raising capital. Long served as executive vice president and chief investment officer of Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants from 2003 until January 2015. In this role, he held leadership responsibility for all acquisitions and development activities including acquisitions for the Kimpton discretionary fund, management contracts, joint ventures, and design and construction projects. From 1996 to 2003, Long was senior vice president of acquisitions and development for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide where he was responsible for all acquisitions and management contract development in North America for all brands. Prior to that, he was with LaSalle Partners from 1993 to 1996 and was part of the team that started the LaSalle Hotel Group, which ultimately became the publically traded REIT LaSalle Hotel Properties. Before LaSalle, he spent eight years with Metric Realty, a large institutional owner of hotels in the 1980s and early 1990s, as vice president, asset management, and as an acquisitions investment analyst. He began his career with Laventhol & Horwath in Philadelphia. Long holds a BS from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration and also is a member of the Hotel Development Council of the Urban Land Institute.

KATHERINE LUGAR
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
AMERICAN HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

Katherine Lugar is president and chief executive officer of the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA). As the head executive of the largest trade association representing the US lodging industry, she implements and directs AH&LA’s services and works directly with the volunteer officers and board of directors in determining the industry’s major strategic initiatives.

Since joining AH&LA in 2013, Lugar has been pivotal in transforming the association and spearheading the rollout of a new membership model and growing its base, which now represents almost half the properties in the entire hotel industry. In just one year, she has led the association to grow to its highest point in its 100-year history, secured record HotelPAC contributions, increased the focus on advocacy, and achieved overall greater industry engagement.

She also has led the development of a three-year strategic plan that will guide the association as it navigates the numerous opportunities and challenges that face the hospitality industry. With a renewed focus on advocacy, Lugar’s depth of experience in public policy and on Capitol Hill will help shape the agenda the industry seeks to center its priorities around: workforce issues, technology and distribution, and travel and tourism promotion.

MARK A. LUNT
PRINCIPAL
EY

Mark A. Lunt brings over 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry to EY and is an active adviser to developers, owners, operators, private equity funds, lenders, and governments in all aspects of the hospitality, leisure, and tourism industries. This experience includes market and financial analysis, operator selection, valuation, operational diagnostics, strategic planning, and transaction due diligence.

Lunt leads EY’s efforts in providing hospitality and real estate advisory services for the US Southeast, Caribbean, and Latin America regions. Major recent engagements include a detailed restructure analysis of regional demand characteristics to advise the lender on go-forward alternatives on major components of a large mixed-use resort, due diligence, and strategic planning for large mixed-use developments in Miami, Brazil, and Puerto Rico; providing strategic tourism advisory services for a Caribbean destination in modernizing and optimizing its tourism platform; and market and financial due diligence for an acquisition of a large portfolio of hotels throughout Latin America.

Lunt has led advisory projects involving all types of hospitality assets, including hotels, vacation ownership, mixed-use development, condominium-hotels, golf courses, marinas, convention facilities, and tourist attractions. He has focused his activities on transaction due diligence and strategic development consulting. He is the chair of Urban Land Institute’s Recreational Development Council. Lunt is the author of many articles, is often quoted in the industry and trade publications, and is an experienced speaker and lecturer on real estate and hospitality issues. He serves on several industry organizations and is considered an expert in operations, marketing, and development of hotels, resorts, and other recreational real estate. Lunt is a graduate of Cornell University.
ELIE MAALOUF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, THE AMERICAS INTERCONTINENTAL HOTELS GROUP (IHG)

Elie Maalouf is chief executive officer, the Americas, at InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG). He leads the management, growth, and profitability of the company’s largest operating region. IHG is a global organization with a broad portfolio of hotel brands, including InterContinental Hotels & Resorts, Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts, Crowne Plaza Hotels & Resorts, Hotel Indigo, EVEN Hotels, Holiday Inn Hotels & Resorts, Holiday Inn Express, Staybridge Suites, and Candlewood Suites.

Before joining IHG, Maalouf was senior adviser with McKinsey & Company. Prior to that, he was with HMSHost Corporation from 2005 to 2011, most recently as president and chief executive officer. He has experience in the development, investment, and management of large, upscale residential, and mixed-use communities.

Maalouf holds an MBA from the Darden Graduate School of Business Administration at the University of Virginia, and a bachelor’s degree in engineering from Virginia Tech.

KEVIN E. MALLORY
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR AND GLOBAL HEAD CBRE HOTELS

Kevin E. Mallory is senior managing director and global head for CBRE Hotels. In this position, Mallory oversees CBRE’s global activity in the lodging sector including transaction, asset management, advisory, and capital market services. Prior to joining CBRE Hotels, Mallory was senior vice president of Hyatt Development Corporation, for which he was responsible for all acquisition and investment activity, investment management, business development, and property development for the company. Previously, Mallory was a principal with Lend Lease Real Estate Investments. He was responsible for all lodging-related capital transactions, as well as the company’s asset management function. Before Lend Lease, Mallory was a founding executive and chief operating officer at Starwood Lodging Corporation. His responsibilities ranged from the development of new business ventures to providing strategic and daily oversight for the corporation. He also worked for Westin Hotels & Resorts, VMS Realty Partners, and industry consultants Laventhol & Horwath.

MELISSA MAHER
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL PARTNER GROUP EXPEDIA

Melissa Maher leads the global partner group for Expedia, where she manages all aspects of global business relationships with the company’s top strategic hotel partners. She also leads the global partner marketing team, charged with enhancing relationships for the industry’s leading ownership companies and key industry associations, along with executing marketing communications and global partner events. In addition, Maher oversees the team responsible for driving the strategy, distribution, and support of Expedia’s gaming lodging supply division and global lodging connectivity teams.

During her tenure with Expedia, Maher has taken an active role in driving meaningful dialogue within the hospitality industry regarding issues affecting Expedia’s top lodging supply partners and other key stakeholders in the online travel space.

Previously, Maher served as a regional director with Expedia, with oversight of the Nevada/gaming lodging division. Prior to joining Expedia in 2001, Maher opened the Paris Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas as the director of conference center sales. She also served as the director of tour and conference sales with the Las Vegas Hilton.

Maher earned an MBA and a BS in hotel administration from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She serves on the Starwood Leisure advisory board and is an adviser on the Expedia Women’s Leadership Council.

THOMAS P. MCCONNELL
EXECUTIVE MANAGING DIRECTOR, GLOBAL HOSPITALITY GROUP CUSHMAN & WAKEFIELD

Thomas P. McConnell is executive managing director of Cushman & Wakefield’s global hospitality group. He specializes in hotel real estate transaction advisory, which includes brokerage, equity, debt, and structured finance advisory, and other related services. McConnell’s experience in the hospitality industry spans three decades, and he has held advisory and consulting roles in numerous market and economic analyses of hotel investments, valuation, management contracts, finance, and hotel company transactions.

Over his 30-year career, McConnell has been involved in numerous hotel transaction and consulting engagements related to lodging investment advisory, finance and refinancing, operational consulting, workout consulting, and brokerage. He has worked with virtually all of the major international hotel companies including Four Seasons, Hilton, Starwood, and Marriott. He also counts various Wall Street firms and private investors as clients, including Blackstone, UBS, Morgan Stanley, Apollo, Goldman Sachs, Citigroup, and J.P. Morgan Chase.

Before joining Cushman & Wakefield, McConnell worked for Insignia/ESG. Prior to that, he worked with Arthur Andersen as director of hospitality consulting services in the firm’s New York City office. Previously, he held senior positions with Kenneth Leventhal & Company and Laventhol & Horwath. He is a frequent lecturer and speaker at industry conferences and is often quoted in various national publications on hospitality-related issues. McConnell has an undergraduate degree from Brown University and a master’s degree from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.
ROBERT MCDOWELL
CHIEF COMMERCIAL OFFICER
CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

Robert McDowell is chief commercial officer for worldwide lodging franchisor Choice Hotels International. In this role, he is responsible for the development and execution of Choice’s growing global, multichannel marketing and distribution strategy. Additionally, McDowell oversees all direct distribution channels, revenue management, global sales and marketing channels, e-commerce, and all channel partner relationships.

Prior to joining Choice, McDowell spent 15 years with United Airlines. During this time, McDowell was the managing director of distribution and e-commerce. As the acting director, McDowell formulated effective e-commerce and distribution strategy. In addition, he often delved into the rigors of negotiating credit card fees and GDS budgets on behalf of the airline. McDowell also served as chief operating officer for C&H International, a $600 million international travel agency, overseeing the company’s daily operations.

McDowell earned his master’s degree in business administration from the University of Notre Dame and his bachelor’s degree from the New York Institute of Technology.

JONATHAN MEHLMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND PRESIDENT
AR-GLOBAL HOSPITALITY TRUST

Jonathan Mehlman was appointed chief executive officer and president of AR-Global Hospitality Trust in November 2014. Previously, he served as executive vice president and chief investment officer of ARC Hospitality, as well as its adviser and property manager since its formation in July 2013. Mehlman has 22 years of experience in the real estate investment banking and capital markets with a significant focus in the hospitality sector. Within the real estate industry, Mehlman has acted as a mergers and acquisitions adviser, investment banker, and lender; he has many years of experience coordinating transaction activity for public and private global hotel brands and US hotel REITs.

From August 2012 until January 2013, Mehlman was co-head of the real estate advisory group at KPMG, before joining American Realty Capital as an executive vice president and managing director. From September 2009 through August 2011, Mehlman was co-head of the lodging and gaming investment banking business for Citadel Securities, an affiliate of The Citadel Group, a Chicago-based $13 billion hedge fund. From August 2008 to September 2009, Mehlman served as head of the real estate advisory group at HSBC. From 2005 to 2008, Mehlman led the hospitality investment banking effort for Citigroup Global Markets. From 1993 to 2005, he worked at Deutsche Bank Securities, and its predecessor company Bankers Trust Company, in the real estate investment banking group, specializing in the business development and client coverage within the hospitality sector and for real estate private equity sponsors.

Mehlman earned a Bachelor of Arts in art history from the University of Michigan and a Master of Business Administration with a focus in real estate and finance from the University of North Carolina.

MICHAEL G. MEDZIGIAN
MANAGING PARTNER
WATERMARK CAPITAL PARTNERS

Michael G. Medzigian is the chairman and managing partner of Watermark Capital Partners, a real estate investment management firm. He also is the president, chief executive officer, and a director of Carey Watermark Investors and Carey Watermark Investors 2, publicly registered real estate investment trusts. He has led some of the world’s largest real estate private equity funds and has overseen over $14 billion of investments. He was previously president and chief executive officer of Lazard Frères Real Estate Investors, and before that, a founding partner of Olympus Real Estate Corporation, the real estate fund management affiliate of Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst. Earlier in his career, he was president of Cohen Realty Services, was founder and national director of the hospitality consulting practice at Deloitte & Touche, and held various management positions with Marriott Corporation. He has served on numerous public and private boards and is a graduate of Cornell University.
JOHN MELICHAREK
PARTNER
BAKER & HOSTETLER

With 30 years of experience advising clients on business and transactional matters, John Melicharek focuses his current practice primarily on transactions within the hospitality industry. He counsels clients on real estate, finance, management, and similar transactional needs, and also provides invaluable guidance during business acquisitions and joint ventures. When clients are involved in complex transactions, contemplating mixed-use project structuring, or facing difficult legal decisions, Melicharek is brought in to analyze their situation and develop creative strategies to meet their business objectives.

Melicharek leads BakerHostetler’s hospitality industry practice. He has been ranked in Chambers USA: America’s Leading Lawyers for Business since 2008 in the area of leisure and hospitality and is listed in The Best Lawyers in America in real estate law. He is a frequent contributor to BakerHostetler’s Hospitality Lawg blog and lecturer at hospitality industry conferences, offering commentary and opinions on hospitality industry issues, trends, challenges, and news.

SUZANNE R. MELLEN
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR OF CONSULTING AND VALUATION
HVS

Suzanne R. Mellen is senior managing director—practice leader of HVS, a full-service consulting and valuation firm specializing in hotel, gaming, and hospitality properties worldwide. Over the course of her 40-year career, she has appraised and consulted on thousands of hotels, gaming assets, and related real estate throughout the world; has authored numerous articles; and is a frequent lecturer and expert witness. Mellen has a BS in hotel administration from Cornell University and holds the following designations: MAI (Appraisal Institute), CRE (Counselor of Real Estate), FRICS (Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors), and ISHC (International Society of Hospitality Consultants).

SANDRA CORDOVA MICEK
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF GLOBAL BRANDS
HYATT HOTELS CORPORATION

Sandra Cordova Micek joined Hyatt Hotels Corporation as senior vice president of global brands in April 2015. In this role, Micek is responsible for developing and leading strategies that build and enhance Hyatt’s brand portfolio, which spans every segment of the hospitality industry.

Micek brings more than 20 years of brand-building experience to the role, most recently as senior vice president of marketing for USA TODAY where she was responsible for strategic marketing, client solutions, creative, trade marketing, events, and research. Prior to USA TODAY, she was a vice president at NBCUniversal where she led cross NBCU integrated marketing and ran Women at NBCU. She also spent nearly 10 years in Silicon Valley, holding a variety of leadership positions at Yahoo! Before that, Micek served as a management consultant with Accenture in the United States and Europe. Micek began her career at Turner Broadcasting in New York.

Micek earned a bachelor’s degree from Syracuse University and holds a master’s degree in business administration from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania where she was a Ford Motor Company Marketing Scholar.
LANCE MICELI
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER
G6 HOSPITALITY

Lance Miceli has served as executive vice president and chief marketing officer for G6 Hospitality since April 2011. He maintains full responsibility for all aspects of topline and brand performance, leading e-commerce, distribution, marketing, public relations, revenue management, sales, and quality programs for Motel 6 and Studio 6 in the United States and Canada, and Hotel 6/Estudio6 in Mexico.

Since joining the enterprise, Miceli has reengineered and realigned all marketing functions—architecting an enhanced in-line revenue management system, responsive web platform, expanded digital distribution, and ongoing improvements in business-to-business and group sales.

Additionally, Miceli shares joint responsibility with operations and franchise leadership for monitoring, measuring, and driving quality improvements for both company-owned and franchised Motel 6/Studio 6 properties. Starting in 2015, Miceli began the development and deployment of a fully integrated operating platform for e-commerce, distribution, and marketing efforts to support the company’s expansion into Latin America, beginning with Mexico in Q4 2015.

Miceli has led the development and execution of award-winning integrated marketing programs for an array of leading brands, including Atlantis Paradise Island, MGM Mirage CityCenter, Travelocity.com, Arby’s Restaurants, Colt 45, Harrah’s Casinos, and Old Style Beer. His experience also includes time at telecommunications giant MCI, where he worked in the new product development and consumer services department. Miceli graduated from Loyola University in Maryland, with a degree in communications and marketing.

NELSON F. MIGDAL
CO-CHAIR, HOSPITALITY PRACTICE GROUP
GREENBURG TRAURIG

Nelson F. Migdal, a shareholder and co-chair of the Greenberg Traurig’s hospitality practice is based in the firm’s Washington, DC office. Migdal focuses his practice on hotel acquisitions, operations, development and finance, large mixed-use projects, hotel management agreements, licensing agreements, and commercial real estate acquisition and sale. Migdal is the president of the Academy of Hospitality Industry Attorneys; a member of the International Society of Hospitality Consultants; a member of the Board of Governors of the Boutique and Lifestyle Lodging Association; a member of the Law360 2016 hospitality editorial advisory board; and a member of the adjunct faculty of the American University Washington College of Law, where he teaches hotel law. Migdal authored the textbook Hotel Law, Transactions, Management and Franchising, a practical guide to the issues that face lawyers and industry leaders working in the hospitality field. Routledge, the world’s leading academic publisher in the humanities and social sciences, published the book in May 2015.

KEVIN MONTANO
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, EDITION GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT
MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

Kevin Montano is the senior vice president responsible for the global growth of the EDITION brand. EDITION was conceived by Ian Schrager in partnership with Marriott International. Montano has significant experience in the lodging industry and has developed hotels in the United States and Asia for Marriott International for over 25 years.

As head of the EDITION global development team, Montano works closely with the Marriott development offices in London, Hong Kong, Zurich, Dubai, Paris, Moscow, and Brazil. This worldwide network of hotel developers provides off-market opportunities to aggressively grow the EDITION brand in all of the key international gateway cities. With the recent opening of the London EDITION, the Miami Beach EDITION, and the New York EDITION, the brand is poised for accelerated worldwide growth.
STEVEN MOORE  
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND  
HEAD OF US REAL ESTATE DEAL ADVISORY  
KPMG  

Steven Moore leads the US real estate corporate finance practice for KPMG and focuses on real estate advisory, restructuring, company mergers and acquisitions, capital raising, and distressed situations. As part of KPMG International’s global real estate practice, and working through a coordinated team of more than 1,500 professionals in the United States and more than 3,000 professionals in 77 countries worldwide, Moore seeks to provide superior service and solutions to KPMG’s clients that beneficially integrate financial and strategic advisory, accounting, and tax expertise.

In his capacity, Moore serves and expands long-standing relationships with real estate clients across the multifamily, industrial, retail, office, healthcare, lodging, and technology infrastructure subsectors. Moore focuses on transactions, advisory services, equity, and debt capital raising for clients including private equity funds, family offices, institutional investors, and management teams of publicly-traded and privately-owned companies, as well as their board members.

Moore has advised on the financing of nearly $100 billion in real estate assets, consummated sale, or acquisition transactions representing more than $20 billion in asset or portfolio value, and participated extensively in both in-court and out-of-court real estate restructurings. Prior to joining KPMG, Moore was a senior vice president at Moelis & Company in the real estate investment banking group. Previously, he held investment banking roles at Citigroup, JPMorgan, and Houlihan Lokey, and he began his professional career in the strategic planning group of the Walt Disney Company. Moore earned a BBA from Loyola University and an MBA from the UCLA Anderson School of Management.

JONATHAN K. MORROW  
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT  
HODGES WARD ELLIOTT  

Senior Vice President Jonathan K. Morrow joined Hodges Ward Elliott in 2008 and works alongside partner Mark Elliott, whose team has transacted upon more than 500 hotels totaling more than $17 billion since 2010. Morrow’s primary focus is on advisory and disposition of company portfolios, complex deal structures, and institutional select service offerings, ranging from one-off assets to multiproperty portfolios.

Most notable recent transactions include the $540 million sale of the DoubleTree Suites New York City—Times Square, $655 million sale of the CBM Portfolio, sale of a 2,481-room portfolio on behalf of RLJ Lodging Trust, sale of the dual-branded Hilton Garden Inn/Homewood Suites in Midtown Atlanta, and the $224 million Rockbridge portfolio sale.

Morrow resides in Manhattan and holds a Bachelor of Business Administration from Kennesaw State University where he was a four-year letterman and two-year captain of the men’s baseball team.

TYLER MORSE  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,  
FOUNDER, AND MANAGING PARTNER  
MCR DEVELOPMENT  

Tyler Morse is chief executive officer and managing partner of MCR Development. Since co-founding MCR in 2006, Morse has overseen the portfolio’s growth to one of the seven largest hotel owner/operators in the country. With $2 billion of assets under management, MCR owns and manages 88 hotels across 10 brands (Marriott and Hilton, among others) in 23 states.

Prior to founding MCR, Morse served as the president of Bliss, the upscale spa and beauty products company based in New York City. Previously, he was the assistant to the chairman and CEO of Starwood Hotels & Resorts, Barry Sternlicht, and was involved with Starwood’s overall corporate investment and development initiatives. Morse has worked as an investment banker at Morgan Stanley in its financial sponsors and mergers and acquisitions group. He started his career at Ernst & Young, where he earned a CPA. Morse also was a ski instructor at Squaw Valley USA and at Termas de Chillán in Chile, was on ski patrol at Mammoth Mountain, and was a baggage handler at LAX for Delta Air Lines.

He is a member of Marriott International’s Courtyard by Marriott advisory board and a member of the policy advisory board for the Fisher Center for Real Estate and Urban Economics at the University of California, Berkeley Haas School of Business. He also is an active member of IREFAC, PREA, and NAREIT. He serves as a trustee on the board of Prep for Prep.

Morse earned an MBA from Harvard Business School and a BS in business administration from the University of California, Berkeley.
MICHAEL MORTON  
VICE PRESIDENT OF OWNER RELATIONS  
BEST WESTERN HOTELS & RESORTS

Michael Morton is vice president of owner relations for Best Western Hotels & Resorts. Morton oversees the company’s North American development team and the development process from hotel member application to activation. Since joining Best Western in 2009, Morton has made many contributions including leading brand training efforts to become one of the best in the industry and developing the company’s customer-care initiative, I Care. He also led the company’s customer feedback initiative by working with partner Medallia to greatly enhance the customer survey feedback reporting tools and training available to members.

Before joining Best Western, Morton was involved in single property and corporate multihotel operations since 1985, working with such brands as Doubletree, Hilton, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, and Marriott. He spent more than 10 years with Boykin Management Company (BMC), most recently as senior vice president of operations, overseeing its full-service hotel portfolio. Morton also was vice president of operations for JHM hotels, hired to lead the company’s entry into the full-service upscale hotel market. He has a very strong hotel operations background with expertise in food and beverage operations. He is a graduate of the University of Akron with a bachelor’s degree in industrial management/industrial accounting.

MICHAEL MURPHY  
HEAD OF LODGING AND LEISURE CAPITAL  
FIRST FIDELITY COMPANIES

Michael Murphy serves as head of lodging and leisure capital markets of the First Fidelity Mortgage Corporation. He serves as a director of Ashford Hospitality Prime and as a director of American Hotel Income Properties REIT. From 1998 to 2002, Murphy served as the senior vice president and chief development officer of ResortQuest International.

Prior to joining ResortQuest, from 1995 to 1997, he was president of Footprints International, a company involved in the planning and development of environmentally friendly hotel properties. From 1994 to 1996, Murphy was a senior managing director of Geller & Co., a Chicago-based hotel advisory and asset management firm. Prior to that, Murphy was a partner in the investment firm of Metric Partners where he was responsible for all real estate matters including acquisitions, asset management, sales, and the company’s investment banking platform. Murphy served in various development roles at Holiday Inns from 1973 to 1980.

Murphy has been co-chairman of the Industry Real Estate Finance Advisory Council (IREFAC) five times and currently serves on the board of the Atlanta Hospitality Alliance and the advisory board of Radical Innovations. He is a member of the Hotel Development Council of the Urban Land Institute. He previously served as lead director of Ashford Hospitality Trust. He was the recipient of the 2014 C. Everett Johnson Award for outstanding leadership in the field of hospitality finance. He holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Memphis and a Master of Arts from the University of Iowa.

FRANCIS J. NARDOZZA  
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
REH CAPITAL PARTNERS

Francis (“Frank”) J. Nardozza is chairman and chief executive officer of REH Capital Partners, a national real estate and hospitality investment and advisory services firm headquartered in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Nardozza has over 39 years of diversified experience in real estate and hospitality investment, finance, and consulting. He is recognized nationally and internationally for his work in the areas of mergers and acquisitions, investment, development planning, and strategic advisory services in the fields of real estate and hospitality. He has advised on over $15 billion in real estate and hospitality transactions throughout his professional career.

Prior to launching REH in 2001, Nardozza was a partner and served as the national and global real estate and hospitality consulting practice leader for KPMG and KPMG Consulting, two entities comprising one of the world’s largest professional services firms, where his tenure with KPMG spanned a period of over 25 years.

Nardozza is the founding chairperson of the US Lodging Industry Investment Council, and currently serves on the executive planning committee of the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference. He also active with many other industry programs and forums including the Urban Land Institute, the American Hotel & Lodging Association, and the American Resort Development Association.

Nardozza is a member of the executive advisory board of the real estate program of Florida State University and has established and endowed the Nardozza Real Estate Scholars Program at Florida State University. Nardozza serves as a trustee of the Florida State University Foundation and in April 2013 was inducted into the Florida State University College of Business Hall of Fame.
CHRISTOPHER J. NASSETTA  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
HILTON WORLDWIDE

Christopher J. Nassetta is president and chief executive officer for Hilton Worldwide. He joined the company in 2007. Previously, Nassetta was president and CEO of Host Hotels & Resorts, a position he held since 2000. He joined Host in 1995 as executive vice president and was elected chief operating officer in 1997.

Before joining Host, Nassetta co-founded Bailey Capital Corporation in 1991, where he was responsible for the operations of the real estate investment and advisory firm. Prior to founding Bailey Capital Corporation, he spent seven years at The Oliver Carr Company, ultimately serving as chief development officer. In this role, he was responsible for all development and related activities for one of the largest commercial real estate companies in the mid-Atlantic region.

Nassetta serves on multiple boards including the World Travel & Tourism Council, CoStar Group, The Real Estate Roundtable, International Youth Foundation, Federal City Council, Wolf Trap Foundation, and The John F. Kennedy Center. Nassetta graduated from the University of Virginia McIntire School of Commerce with a degree in finance. He currently serves on the McIntire School of Commerce Advisory Board.

JONATHAN C. NEHMER  
CHAIRMAN AND FOUNDER  
JONATHAN NEHMER + ASSOCIATES

Jonathan C. Nehmer, AIA, ISHC, is the chairman and founder of Jonathan Nehmer + Associates, an international architecture, interior design, project management, and design and construction consulting firm that specializes in the hospitality industry. He is a principal with HVS Design. Nehmer is an expert in the development, design, and construction of hospitality projects. A licensed architect, Nehmer has more than 35 years of experience as an architect, designer, and owner’s representative for the hospitality industry. Prior to founding Jonathan Nehmer + Associates in 1989, Nehmer directed the design and construction of real estate development projects for several major hotel chains, including Marriott International and Ramada.

In 2009, Nehmer and the JN+A team created the first Hotel Cost Estimating Guide, a comprehensive guide that provides rule-of-thumb ranges of costs for various levels of renovation that is published with new data each year. He also is an author of the ISHC 2014 CapEx Study, which documents the history of capital expenditures in the hotel industry.

CHRISTOPHER A. NOWAK  
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND GENERAL COUNSEL  
WYNDHAM HOTEL GROUP

Christopher A. Nowak is executive vice president and general counsel for Wyndham Hotel Group, responsible for overseeing the company’s involvement in all legal matters, both domestic and international, and providing strategic direction and counsel to the company and its executives in regards to those matters. Nowak has more than 12 years of experience and has held a number of leadership positions in both Wyndham Worldwide and Wyndham Hotel Group, having served most recently as senior vice president, legal, for Wyndham Worldwide. Previously, he was group vice president, legal, responsible for supporting domestic and international legal matters for Wyndham Hotel Group.

Prior to his role at Wyndham Worldwide, Nowak served Wyndham Hotel Group in numerous roles, and has been involved in hotel franchise transactions, development transactions, franchise compliance, and disclosure, as well as consulting on privacy and marketing matters and structuring joint venture transactions within the United States and abroad. He also has served Wyndham Worldwide as group vice president—international law and strategic sourcing and was responsible for international compliance matters and international transactions, strategic sourcing transactions, and various other matters, including government relations.

Before joining Wyndham, and its predecessor, Cendant Corporation, Nowak was an associate with the law firm of Hogan & Hartson in Washington, DC, where he practiced franchise and antitrust law. Nowak is a member of the American Bar Association and is admitted to practice in Virginia, the District of Columbia, and New Jersey (limited license). He is a graduate of the State University of New York at Albany and The Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law.
**STEFANI C. O’CONNOR**
**EXECUTIVE NEWS EDITOR**
**HOTEL BUSINESS**

Award-winning journalist Stefani C. O’Connor is executive news editor at Hotel Business magazine, the leading trade publication covering the lodging industry and its decision-makers. She also serves as managing editor of the magazine’s National Executive Roundtable Series, which brings together executives from the hospitality arena and adjunct disciplines—finance, design, construction, technology, environmental, etc.—to discuss current issues of importance. She is a contributing editor for Hotel Business Design and its website, hotelbusinessdesign.com, and also contributes to hotelbusiness.com and Hotel Business’s daily e-newsletter.

Prior to joining Hotel Business, O’Connor was senior editor at Business Travel News and previous to that was editor in chief of Hotel & Resort Industry magazine.

A hard-news reporter and editor for several New York City newspapers prior to focusing on hospitality and finance, O’Connor’s interviews have ranged from gang members to fashion designers, politicians to religious leaders, government officials to CEOs “and all the ordinary people in between who have extraordinary stories to tell.”

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**CHRISTOPHER OSTAPOVICZ**
**REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT, ASSET MANAGEMENT**
**HOST HOTELS & RESORTS**

Christopher Ostapovicz has over eight years of experience in hotel asset management in a 25-plus-year career in the hospitality industry. He manages an asset portfolio of nine hotels that are located in Hawaii, Palm Springs, and San Diego. Ostapovicz is an active member of the Hotel Asset Management Association (HAMA) and an adjunct professor at the Georgetown University School of Continuing Studies. Prior to hotel asset management, Ostapovicz was with Marriott International in various hotel operations and finance roles across many of its brands, including Ritz-Carlton, Marriott Hotels and Resorts, and JW Marriott. He holds an MS in real estate from Johns Hopkins University, an MBA from Georgetown University, and a BS in accounting from the University of Maryland.

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**MARK K. OWENS**
**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND HEAD OF HOSPITALITY CAPITAL MARKETS**
**CBRE**

Mark K. Owens is an executive vice president and the head of hospitality capital markets for CBRE. He is responsible for the origination and placement of hospitality transactions, including debt, equity, joint venture equity, and transaction sales.

Prior to CBRE, Owens ran the hospitality practice at Ackman-Ziff, and was a key component in building the team’s production to in excess of $1 billion in annual transaction volume. In addition to Ackman-Ziff, Owens was a vice president at Sonnenblick Goldman where he closed $3 billion in transactions. He also worked at HVS New York.

Owens is a graduate of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, was a founding board member of AH&LA’s Under 30 Council, and was voted one of Real Estate Weekly’s Rising Stars. He is a member of the Urban Land Institute, has spoken at the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference, and is a member of the Cornell Real Estate Council.

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**ASHISH R. PARIKH**
**CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**
**HERSHA HOSPITALITY TRUST**

Ashish R. Parikh has been chief financial officer of Hersha Hospitality Trust (HT) since 1999. HT is a publicly traded real estate investment trust that focuses on the ownership of upscale hotels in urban gateway markets and destination resort locations. HT currently has ownership interests in 55 properties and focuses on premium branded hotels in the Marriott, Hilton, Starwood, and Hyatt family of brands. HT also owns premium independent hotels such as the Rittenhouse Hotel in Philadelphia and the Sanctuary Resort in Monterey, California.

Prior to joining Hersha, Parikh was an assistant vice president in the mergers and acquisition group for Fleet Financial Group where he developed valuable expertise in numerous forms of capital raising activities including leveraged buyouts, bank syndications, and venture financing. Parikh also has been employed by Tyco International and practiced as a certified public accountant with Ernst & Young. Parikh is currently a board member of the Philadelphia Real Estate Council and the Real Estate Roundtable. Parikh earned an MBA from the NYU Stern School of Business and a BBA from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
MEHUL PATEL
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
NEWCRESTIMAGE

Mehul Patel chose a future in business before graduating from high school, when he and Chirag Patel partnered to buy their first company, a small bulk-mailing business. They increased the company’s sales fourfold in one year, and then agreed to pursue a new venture. They sold the mailing business and, with Patel’s brother Sanjay, bought an independent motel in Dallas. It would be the first of many for the aspiring hoteliers, but their foray into hospitality was not without setbacks. A fire at their third property threatened to stop their momentum, but the team persevered.

Patel continued to build his reputation as a hotel developer, and before long, Newcrest Management was born. He was the strategic mind behind the plan that eventually launched their company into a position of industry leadership—catering to “staycation” travelers by developing limited-service hotels along interstate highways and in college towns.

Patel met one of the greatest challenges of his career when the economy plunged into a recession in 2008. The company was committed to an ambitious development plan that included 30 new hotels. But with forecasts growing worse by the day, Patel mobilized his team and some key partners to adapt. The outcome was a bold decision to recapitalize by selling 20 hotels in a single portfolio jointly owned by Newcrest Management and their partners at Image Hospitality, to Starwood Capital. The sale prompted discussions of the future of the partnership, and in 2012, the companies merged to form NewcrestImage.

From 2013 to 2014, Patel served as the youngest chairperson of the Asian American Hotel Owners Association (AAHOA). He is often invited to share his story and expertise with industry peers at both public and private engagements. Patel is a 2016 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year finalist and earned his undergraduate degree in computer information systems from the University of Texas at Arlington.

KEITH M. PATTIZ
PARTNER
MCDERMOTT WILL & EMERY

Keith M. Pattiz is a partner in the law firm of McDermott Will & Emery and is based in the firm’s New York office. He is head of the firm’s real estate group. Pattiz has extensive experience in the areas of commercial leasing, financing, sales and acquisitions, hotel transactions, and real estate workout matters. Clients have included major residential, office, hotel and shopping center developers, hotel operating companies, lending institutions, and foreign and US investors. He has been a regular panelist and moderator at the annual NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference since 2006. Pattiz has been recognized as a leading real estate lawyer in Chambers USA and in the 2006–2015 editions of The Best Lawyers in America and Super Lawyers. He earned a BA from the University of Wisconsin and a JD from the NYU School of Law.

BRIAN PAYEA
HEAD OF INDUSTRY RELATIONS
TRIPADVISOR

Brian Payea is the head of industry relations for TripAdvisor and is responsible for global educational and policy outreach to the travel industry. He focuses on strengthening the ties between TripAdvisor and the hospitality community. His department builds tools for hotel brand management, hoteliers, and other hospitality professionals to leverage the insights available from the wealth of traveler-contributed information on TripAdvisor and other social media outlets.

Payea has more than 30 years of experience in communications and marketing leadership, and is a member of the HSMAI Americas board, the HSMAI Foundation board, and the Lodging Industry Ratings Advisory Council at AH&LA. He is a frequent speaker on the subject of social media in travel at industry events around the world. Payea joined TripAdvisor in 2006. Previously, he led public relations, marketing, government relations, and investor relations at several technology and Internet companies.
TIM PECK
CHAIRMAN
OBMI

Tim Peck is chairman of OBMI, the international award-winning architectural design and master-planning firm. From destination creation, residential, and civic opportunities, OBMI’s mission is to create lifestyle and transformational experiences with a heart and soul. As chairman, Peck’s curiosity and ability to interpret the dreams of his clients into reality inspire a sense of creativity and vision that transcends the human experience. From the shores of the Caribbean to the wilderness of Africa and on into the deserts of the Middle East, Peck leads OBMI with global experience and local sensitivity when it comes to building future history together. Entering its 80th year of sustainable and innovative excellence, OBMI serves clients that include hoteliers, royalty, corporations, governments, investment groups, and private individuals.

Currently based out of the Grand Cayman office, Peck also leads OBMI’s Island Living Studio, which is one of the company’s five core competencies and disciplines within its centers of excellence.

STEVEN W. PEDIGO
DIRECTOR
NYU SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES
INITIATIVE FOR CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN CITIES
CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR
OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
NYU SCHOOL OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES

Steven W. Pedigo is the director of the NYU School of Professional Studies Initiative for Creativity and Innovation in Cities and a clinical assistant professor of economic development at the NYU School of Professional Studies. In this role, he is leading the effort to develop and to deliver the school’s civic engagement and economic development curriculum and research program.

As a consultant and adviser in the urban space, Pedigo has provided business intelligence and expertise for an array of clients such as BMW, Converse, Starwood, IBM, Philips, Cirque du Soleil, Audi, Pinewood Studios, Zappos, and Kraft. His city and urban development clients represent cities from across the globe: New York, Jerusalem, Vancouver, Washington, DC, Brisbane, the Yukon, Miami, and São Paulo.

As researcher and writer, Pedigo’s work has been featured in such publications as The New York Times, The Washington Post, and The Dallas Morning News. Pedigo earned a bachelor’s degree from the University of Texas at Austin and graduate degrees from the H. John Heinz III School for Public Policy and Management at Carnegie Mellon University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

@nyuhospitality

DANIEL C. PEEK
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR
HFF

Daniel C. Peek is a senior managing director and head of the hospitality practice group for HFF. He is responsible for institutional-grade hotel and resort property transactions throughout North America, Latin America, and the Caribbean. During his career, he has completed nearly $12 billion in investment sale, debt, and structured finance transactions.

Peek joined the firm in October 2007. Prior to HFF, he was a co-founder and managing director of Regent Street, an affiliate of The Plascencia Group (TPG), a boutique firm specializing in sale, financing, and advisory services for distinctive hotels and resorts throughout the Americas. He also served as senior vice president at TPG.

Peek is a full member of the Urban Land Institute the Hotel Development Council, the advisory board of the University of Florida Real Estate Center, the advisory board of the Cornell Real Estate and Finance Center, and the Cornell Hotel Society.
DAVID PEPPER
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
CHOICE HOTELS INTERNATIONAL

David Pepper is chief development officer for worldwide lodging franchisor Choice Hotels International. In this position, he is responsible for driving unit growth for each of the company's brands in key markets worldwide. He also is an officer of the company. Pepper joined Choice in 2002 as vice president of franchise sales and development for the company’s new construction brands. In 2004, he was promoted to senior vice president of franchise development for North America.

In January 2005, Pepper served as an integral part of the team that launched the Cambria Suites brand in direct response to strong market demand for upscale lodging product, as well as the company’s capacity to build brand loyalty in a highly competitive consumer marketplace.

In September 2005, Pepper led the company’s acquisition of the Suburban Extended Stay Hotel brand, which not only expanded Choice’s presence in the extended stay brand market, but also established Choice as the largest franchisor in the economy extended-stay segment. As part of the launch of Cambria Suites and the acquisition of Suburban Extended Stay, Pepper took on the additional responsibility for brand strategy and operations of the company’s upscale and extended stay brands (Cambria Suites, MainStay Suites, and Suburban Extended Stay Hotel), including marketing, design and construction, franchise development, franchise services, and quality assurance.

During his tenure at Choice, Pepper has been responsible for leading franchise sales to record levels. In fact, in the first three years under his leadership, franchise sales more than doubled. In 2009, in recognition of his proven track record in driving significant unit growth for the company, Pepper was named senior vice president, global development.

Prior to joining Choice, Pepper spent six years with US Franchise Systems as vice president of franchise sales for Hawthorn Suites and Microtel Inns. He also spent five years with Holiday Inn Worldwide as a director of franchise sales. A graduate of Tufts University, Pepper has 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry and is actively involved in a number of organizations, including past chair of the Council of Inns & Suites for the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA).

GILDA PEREZ-ALVARADO
MANAGING DIRECTOR
JLL

Gilda Perez-Alvarado joined JLL’s hotels and hospitality group in 2004. Based in New York City as managing director and head of the global hotel desk, Perez-Alvarado focuses on cross-border investment sales. In her international role, Perez-Alvarado facilitates high-profile, global transactions by monitoring cross-border capital flows and leveraging JLL’s relationships with key decision-makers to access off-shore capital. In the past 24 months, Perez-Alvarado has coordinated the sale of several hotels to off-shore investors, including the K+K portfolio in Europe, the New York Marriott East Side, Le Meridien Cambridge, and the InterContinental New York Barclay. She also has advised on other high-profile transactions, including the Essex House New York and the Turnberry Scotland. Perez-Alvarado earned her MBA from Instituto de Empresa in Spain. She graduated with honors and earned her Bachelor of Science from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. Perez-Alvarado was the recipient of the 2015 Jack A. Shaffer Financial Adviser of the Year Award.

JESS PETITT
VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL BUSINESS ANALYTICS
HILTON WORLDWIDE

Jess Petitt is the vice president of global business analytics at Hilton Worldwide, where he leads a department responsible for analyzing the macroeconomic, industry, competitive, and development environments; provides cross-functional analysis for the executive team; and partners with IT to implement Hilton’s enterprise business intelligence strategy. Prior to joining Hilton, Petitt served as corporate director of marketing and sales at HEI Hotels & Resorts, holding myriad responsibilities including sales selection, training and development, and revenue analysis. He also started the company’s digital marketing function. A second-generation hotelier, Petitt is a graduate of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration and earned his MBA from the Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland. He has been named one of Hotel & Motel Management’s “Thirty Under 30” and has served as a guest columnist for various industry publications.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:

LOU PLASENCIA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
THE PLASENCIA GROUP

Lou Plasencia is responsible for The Plasencia Group’s business development activities and the oversight of all acquisitions, dispositions, and consulting engagements handled by the firm, which he established in 1993.

Plasencia’s substantial industry experience has positioned him to be involved in a number of high-profile hospitality assignments, including transactions such as the Marriott Wardman Park in Washington, DC, the Four Seasons in Atlanta, Georgia, Amelia Island Plantation in northeast Florida, and the Marriott Waterside in Tampa, Florida. He also has coordinated several major portfolio disposition engagements along with significant consulting projects.

Plasencia is an active member of the Hotel Development Council of the Urban Land Institute. He sits on several other philanthropic and civic advisory councils and boards. He earned a master’s degree from Indiana University in Bloomington, and a bachelor’s degree from Loyola University in New Orleans.

STEPHEN D. PLAVIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
BLACKSTONE MORTGAGE TRUST

Stephen D. Plavin is a senior managing director of the Blackstone real estate debt strategies group and the chief executive officer of Blackstone Mortgage Trust. Before joining Blackstone, Plavin was chief executive officer of Capital Trust (predecessor to Blackstone Mortgage Trust) and CT Investment Management Co., a commercial real estate debt investment manager and rated special servicer. Prior to joining Capital Trust in 1998, Plavin was co-head of global real estate for The Chase Manhattan Bank and Chase Securities. He is a board member of Omega Healthcare Investors and WCI Communities. Plavin earned a BA from Tufts University and an MBA from the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University.

RON POHL
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, BRAND MANAGEMENT
BEST WESTERN HOTELS & RESORTS

Ron Pohl is senior vice president, brand management, for Best Western Hotels & Resorts. He serves on the company’s executive committee and leads the brands operations and development for North America and Asia. Pohl’s responsibilities include key departments within the hotel chain, including customer care, member services, revenue management, education and training, design, supply, and global quality assurance. He was instrumental in the creation and launch of Best Western Vib, Glo, and the Premier Collection. Pohl joined Best Western in 2007 as vice president of operations. In that role, the 35-year hospitality industry veteran significantly improved revenue management systems, brand quality, and guest satisfaction. Prior to joining Best Western, Pohl spent more than 20 years with Boykin Management Company. With Boykin, Pohl also spent 10 years as a full-service hotel general manager and earned awards for sales leadership, website development, and outstanding customer service. He served in a number of senior-level positions in the areas of marketing, sales, and revenue management, and ultimately as senior vice president of operations. Pohl’s diverse hotel background comes from working with an array of hotel brands, including Choice Hotels International, Hilton Worldwide, Marriott International, Radisson Hotels, and independent resorts and condo hotels. He currently serves on the AH&LA board of directors and previously served on the board of directors for the Convention and Visitors Bureau of Greater Cleveland, as well as advisory committees for Marriott and DoubleTree hotels.

ALEXANDER PYHAN
VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION
MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

Alexander Pyhan serves as vice president, global distribution—OTA and metasearch at Marriott International. He provides global leadership for Marriott’s strategic partnerships with online travel agencies (OTAs) and metasearch providers, including planning, governance, operations, and relationship management. Pyhan joined Marriott in 2003 as the account manager for the company’s partnerships with travel management companies and travel agencies in Central Europe and has assumed additional responsibility for Marriott’s global distribution, including most recently serving as senior director, e-commerce channels for EMEA and APAC.
BRIAN QUINN
CHIEF FRANCHISE OFFICER
RLHC

Brian Quinn joined Red Lion Hotels Corporation (RLHC) as senior vice president and chief franchise officer in May 2014. He oversees hotel franchise development opportunities, facilitating expansion of the RLHC brands across the United States. With over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Quinn most recently served as executive vice president of development at Driftwood Hospitality Management and vice president of upscale development for InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG), overseeing growth of the Crowne Plaza and Hotel Indigo brands across key markets including the United States, Canada, and the Caribbean. During his 20 years with IHG, Quinn also held leadership positions in franchise services, owner relations, and hotel operations. Previously, he served in franchise development for Hilton Hotels Corporation.

WILLIAM RAHM
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR
CENTERBRIDGE PARTNERS

William Rahm joined Centerbridge Partners in 2006 and currently focuses on investments in the real estate and gaming and lodging sectors. Prior to joining Centerbridge, Rahm was a member of Blackstone’s real estate private equity group, where he completed investments in lodging businesses and real assets. Rahm serves on the board of directors of Extended Stay America and as chairman of the board of directors of Carefree Communities and Great Wolf Resorts. He also is a presiding independent director of Brixmor Property Group. Rahm graduated cum laude from Yale College. He earned his JD cum laude from Harvard Law School and his MBA with distinction from Harvard Business School.

ALLISON REID
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND ACQUISITIONS, NORTH AMERICA
STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS WORLDWIDE

Allison Reid is senior vice president of development and acquisitions, North America for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide. In her current role, Reid leads the development team responsible for all development activities in North America and the Caribbean. Reid joined the company in 2000 and is a member of the North America senior leadership team. A seasoned, established business leader with more than 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Reid has spent the last 15-plus years in leadership roles in real estate, development, finance, operations, and branding. Prior to her current role, Reid was senior vice president, global development, focusing on developing and implementing Starwood’s global development strategy including finding creative financing solutions for owners and developers; senior vice president of real estate investment, overseeing Starwood’s global joint venture and lease positions; vice president and chief financial officer of W Hotels during the initial growth phase and roll-out of related brands; vice president of investor relations; and vice president of owner services. She holds a gaming license from the State of Nevada and was a member of the board of directors for Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino, W Montreal, and The Westin Savannah Resort. Prior to Starwood, Reid spent six years at Interstate Hotels & Resorts in various finance and regional roles. She began her career with ITT Sheraton as a corporate trainee at the St. Regis New York.

STEPHANIE RICCA
EDITOR IN CHIEF
HOTEL NEWS NOW

Stephanie Ricca is editor in chief of Hotel News Now (HNN), where she manages the content vision for the group’s award-winning daily newsletter, as well as other initiatives. She has nearly a decade’s worth of experience in hotel trade journalism, most recently serving as editor in chief of Hotel Management magazine before joining HNN in January 2015. She is a graduate of Wittenberg University and holds a master’s degree in journalism from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University.
**KIM RICHARDS**  
**PRESIDENT**  
**THE ATHENS GROUP**

Kim Richards founded The Athens Group in 1988. His real estate development career began in 1977 when he was named vice president and general counsel of The Estes Co., a Tucson, Arizona homebuilder and developer of commercial and residential communities. After his 1983 appointment as president of Estes Properties, he was responsible for the successful acquisition, planning, and development of several large-scale master planned communities, including the award-winning Ventana Canyon community in Tucson. Richards acquired Estes Properties from The Estes Co. in 1988 and the company was renamed The Athens Group. In 1992, Richards and The Athens Group executives formed Hualalai Development Company and led the development of the Four Seasons Hualalai Resort on the Big Island of Hawaii. The project, which was completed in 1996, quickly gained a reputation as Hawaii’s most exclusive resort community.

Since 1997, Richards has led The Athens Group through a period of significant growth, including the development of five major resort properties for Ritz-Carlton and Montage Hotels & Resorts in the western United States. He is a member of the board of governors of the Urban Land Institute. Richards earned his undergraduate degree in political science from Western Michigan University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Arizona College of Law.

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**JAVIER ROSENBERG**  
**CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, AMERICAS**  
**CARLSON REZIDOR HOTEL GROUP**

Javier Rosenberg is responsible for leading operations and development for Carlson Rezidor Hotel Group, which includes Radisson Blu, Radisson, Park Inn by Radisson, Park Plaza, Country Inns & Suites By Carlson, and the recently introduced Radisson RED brand in the Americas, reporting to David P. Berg, chief executive officer, Carlson Hospitality Group.

In this role, Rosenberg is focused on the performance and growth of the Carlson Rezidor brands in the Americas. Key initiatives include further expansion of the revitalized Radisson brand; the introduction and growth of Carlson Rezidor’s upper-upscale brand, Radisson Blu; the launch of Radisson RED, the new lifestyle brand announced in 2014; the growth and modernization of Country Inns & Suites By Carlson; and focus on Carlson Rezidor’s owned and managed hotel portfolio in the Americas, ensuring operational excellence and optimizing performance of the hotels.

Rosenberg has been with Carlson Rezidor since January 2011 in a number of executive leadership roles. His past experiences include extensive global operational roles in North America, Latin America, Europe, and Asia with companies including InterContinental Hotels Group and Raffles.

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**DAVID A. RODRIGUEZ**  
**EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND GLOBAL CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER**  
**MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL**

David A. Rodriguez assumed the role of executive vice president and global chief human resources officer for Marriott International in 2006. Rodriguez was appointed as a corporate officer in 2000, and in 2004, to the board of directors’ Committee for Excellence that focuses on advancing global diversity and inclusion in the company. Prior to joining Marriott International in 1998, Rodriguez held various human resources-related positions at Citigroup (now Citigroup) and Avon Products. He is on the board of directors of the Human Resources Policy Association, and a member of the Personnel Roundtable, the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, and the American Psychological Association. Rodriguez was inducted as a Fellow of the National Academy of Human Resources in 2014. Rodriguez graduated from New York University in 1980 with a Bachelor of Arts in psychology and in 1987 with a PhD in industrial/organizational psychology.

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**RICK ROSS**  
**CO-CHAIR, GLOBAL HOTELS AND LEISURE**  
**DENTONS**

Rick Ross is the co-chair of Dentons’ global hotels and leisure practice. Widely regarded as an industry expert, he advises clients globally on complex hospitality and leisure matters, including acquisitions and dispositions (single assets, portfolios), corporate M&A matters, joint ventures, development, and operations. Ross counsels clients around the world as to creating and implementing strategies regarding all aspects of hotel and resort investments, management, and operations. Additionally, he negotiates and documents hotel management and license agreements, and counsels clients with regard to structuring and documenting global, complex mixed-use projects featuring hotels and resorts with residential and other commercial components.

Ross has been ranked “Band 1” nationally in the leisure and hospitality sector every year by Chambers USA. Under his leadership for each of these years, Dentons has been one of only two law firms to be “Band 1” nationally ranked in the hotels and leisure sector in the United States, and is regarded as one of the top few in the world. Ross is a member of Law360’s hospitality editorial advisory board. In 2014, he was named an MVP in Hospitality, and Dentons’ hotel group was named a Practice Group of the Year by the publication.
STEPHEN RUSHMORE, JR.
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
HVS

As president and chief executive officer of HVS, a leading hospitality consulting and services organization with over 35 offices around the globe, Stephen Rushmore, Jr. directs the worldwide operation of the firm and is responsible for overseeing the long-term strategy. Founded in 1980, HVS has provided consulting services and solutions for thousands of clients in all 50 states and more than 70 foreign countries for hotels, restaurants, mixed-use, shared ownership, and leisure assets. Rushmore, Jr. is a state-certified appraiser and frequently lectures at major hotel schools around the world. He is a member of the Young Presidents’ Organization (YPO) and is on the board for the Appalachian Mountain Club (AMC), the nation’s oldest outdoor recreation and conservation organization. He earned a Bachelor of Science from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

MICHELLE S. RUSSO
FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
HOTEL ASSET VALUE ENHANCEMENT (HOTELAVE)

Michelle S. Russo, CHAM, MAI, CHA, has more than 25 years of practical, hands-on experience with hotels, restaurants, resorts, convention centers, real estate, and finance. She has worked on thousands of hotel assets across the United States and in 2003, founded Hotel Asset Value Enhancement. While Russo oversees the practice, she is very involved in strategic asset positioning, management contract negotiations, and interacting with senior-level brand and management executives on behalf of the portfolio.

Prior to founding hotelAVE, Russo was vice president, senior leisure analyst for Deutsche Banc Alex Brown where she also garnered capital markets experience. Her experience on Wall Street forced her to be very forward-focused. Russo also managed a $500 million portfolio for John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company where she improved the portfolio and achieved 20 percent cash-on-cash returns. She is well-known for initiating the legal action taken in the 2660 Woodley Road case in which Hancock was originally awarded $52 million. In addition, Russo was responsible for changing the property’s management and overseeing a $100 million repositioning renovation of the 1,500-room convention hotel. Russo is a regular guest lecturer at Cornell University and has appeared on CNBC and CNN to provide commentary on the hospitality and leisure industry. She also has been invited as a speaker at numerous industry conferences, including those at New York University, Urban Land Institute, and Boston University, as well as the Distressed Hotel Summit and the Hunter Hotel Conference. Russo serves on the dean’s advisory board for the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration. She also is a member of ULI’s hotel council, Marriott’s distribution strategy advisory committee, the AHLA’s financial management committee, Morgans board of directors, and the Pillsbury Institute for Hospitality Entrepreneurship advisory board at Cornell University. Russo earned a Bachelor of Science from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

CHRISTIAN J. RYAN
MANAGING DIRECTOR, US REAL ESTATE AND HOSPITALITY PRACTICE—US HOSPITALITY AND GAMING PRACTICE LEADER
MARSH & McLennan Companies

Christian J. Ryan is a managing director and leads Marsh’s hospitality and gaming practice groups. Ryan also is an executive committee member for Marsh’s US real estate, hospitality, and gaming practice groups. Ryan is responsible for growth, retention, innovation, client service, and market delivery for Marsh’s real estate, hospitality, and gaming clients.

With more than 15 years of insurance and risk management consulting experience, Ryan is recognized as one of the country’s leading real estate, gaming, and hospitality insurance brokers. Ryan’s clients and team members benefit from his years of experience in managing clients’ risk. His clients include international hospitality and gaming conglomerates, billion-dollar real estate companies, hotels, resorts, and real estate investment trusts. Ryan specializes in complex and challenging risk programs, and his clients routinely rely on his guidance in navigating insurance markets. He is responsible for placing more than $20 billion in construction values and coordinates more than $65 million in property and casualty premiums annually. Ryan earned his Bachelor of Science in international finance from Florida Atlantic University.
JEFFREY SCHAGREN  
GENERAL COUNSEL, VICE PRESIDENT, AND REGIONAL TALENT AND CULTURE LEADER  
ACCORHOTELS

Jeffrey Schagren is the general counsel, vice president, and regional talent and culture leader for AccorHotels North America, Central America, and the Caribbean (NCAC) region. A member of the NCAC executive committee, he is responsible for leading all legal matters for the company on a variety of topics including, but not limited to, franchising, development, mergers and acquisitions, and risk management, as well as labor, employment, and litigation matters. He also oversees all aspects of human resources in the region, such as legal compliance, benefits, engagement and retention, and employee relations.

Before joining AccorHotels, Schagren held various corporate counsel and human resources positions at 20/20 Companies, JMS Consulting and Mediation, Mirarchi Management Group, and LQ Management.

Schagren earned a BA in journalism from New York University and obtained his JD from Brooklyn Law School. He is a member of the state bars of New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Texas, the US District Courts for the Southern and Eastern Districts of New York, and the District of Maryland.

MATTHEW W. SCHUYLER  
CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER  
HILTON WORLDWIDE

Matthew W. Schuyler is the chief human resources officer for Hilton Worldwide and leads the company’s global human resources organization. Schuyler joined the company in 2009.

Previously, Schuyler was chief human resources officer at Capital One Financial Corporation. Prior to Capital One, Schuyler served as a vice president of human resources with Cisco Systems and as a partner with PricewaterhouseCoopers in the global human resources group. He holds an MBA from the University of Michigan and a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Penn State University.

Schuyler serves on the national board of directors for the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America and is a member of the Penn State University board of trustees.

JAY H. SHAH  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
HERSHA HOSPITALITY TRUST

Jay H. Shah is Hersha Hospitality Trust’s chief executive officer and a member of the board of trustees. Hersha is a New York Stock Exchange listed real estate investment trust, which owns and operates upscale hotels in urban gateway markets. The company’s hotels are located in New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington DC, Miami, San Diego, and Los Angeles.

Shah is involved in all areas of the business with a particular emphasis on strategic relationships, capital transactions, asset management, and acquisitions. Prior to his role as CEO, Shah served as the president and chief operating officer of Hersha Hospitality, as well as the managing director of the Hersha Group, a private equity affiliate of Hersha Hospitality Trust that provides hotel management, development, and construction management services to hotel owners. Before joining Hersha, Shah formed Shah & Byler, a law firm focusing on real estate and construction. Shah also was a consultant at the former Coopers & Lybrand, and a legislative assistant to the late Senator John Heinz.

Shah currently serves on the board of trustees of The Episcopal Academy, a coeducational college preparatory school for grades K-12, and the Cornell University dean’s advisory board for the School of Hotel Administration. He also is a member of the ULI Hotel Development Council, the Philadelphia CEO Council for Growth, and a fellow at the Cornell Center for Real Estate Finance. Shah also is on the board of directors of the American Hotel & Lodging Association and the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. Shah also serves on the dean’s advisory board for the Fox School of Business at Temple University. He was named Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2013 for Greater Philadelphia and was a finalist in the national competition. In addition, Shah recently joined fellow CEOs from Marriott and Hilton, who were selected as the top three hospitality executives of the year by Commercial Property Executive magazine.

Shah earned his Bachelor of Science from Cornell University, a JD from the Beasley School of Law at Temple University, and an MBA from the Fox School of Business at Temple University.
Mit Shah
Chief Executive Officer and Senior Managing Principal
Noble Investment Group

Mit Shah founded Noble Investment Group in 1993 to specialize in making value-added and opportunistic investments in the lodging and hospitality real estate sector. Through its private equity real estate funds, Noble has invested more than $3 billion in upper-upscale and upscale hotels and currently owns more than 10,000 rooms throughout the United States.

Shah is chairman of the board for LaQuinta, president of Marriott International’s MINA board, a member of the owners’ advisory board for Hyatt Hotels Corporation, and a member of the Industry Real Estate and Finance Advisory Council (IREFAC) of the American Hotel and Lodging Association.

Shah is an active supporter of educational objectives and is currently serving his third term as a member of the board of trustees for his alma mater, Wake Forest University. In addition, Shah is an executive committee member of the Woodward Academy governing board and a trustee of the University System of Georgia Foundation.

Neil H. Shah
President and Chief Operating Officer
Hersha Hospitality Trust

Neil H. Shah is president and chief operating officer of Hersha Hospitality Trust. Over the last 15 years, Shah has been instrumental in the acquisition and development of over $3 billion of hotel real estate in major markets. Shah also is a partner and director at HMM, one of the leading hotel operators in the United States.

Prior to Hersha, Shah served as a director and consultant with The Advisory Board Company and the Corporate Executive Board, strategy research firms based in Washington, DC. He serves on the board of trustees for the National Constitution Center and on the corporate council for the Barnes Foundation. He is a member of the board of directors of the Educational Foundation and co-chairman of the Institutional Real Estate Finance Advisory Council (IREFAC) of the American Hotel & Lodging Association. Shah earned a Bachelor of Arts in political science and a Bachelor of Science in management, both with honors, from the University of Pennsylvania and The Wharton School of Business. He earned his MBA from Harvard Business School.

Suril Shah
Managing Director
Starwood Capital Group

Suril Shah is a managing director in the acquisitions group at Starwood Capital Group. In this role, Shah is responsible for originating, structuring, underwriting, and closing investments in the lodging and gaming sectors. Since June 2011, he has led Starwood Capital’s US hotel acquisitions team, which has invested in more than $7 billion of hotel assets during his tenure. Since October 2014, he also has led the firm’s select-service hotel asset management team.

After joining Starwood Capital in 2005, Shah spent three years in Paris as a member of the management team of Groupe du Louvre, which owns, manages, and franchises more than 1,000 hotels throughout Europe, in addition to over a dozen luxury hotels. Shah was previously with Gleacher Partners, where he focused on mergers and acquisitions across all industries.

Shah earned his BS in management science and engineering from Stanford University. Shah currently serves on the boards of directors of Hersha Hospitality Management and InTown Suites.

Mark D. Shalala
Vice President of Development
Cambria Hotels & Suites
Choice Hotels International

Mark D. Shalala is vice president of development with Choice Hotels International and is responsible for the growth of the Cambria Hotels & Suites brand, leading a franchise sales team in developing and implementing new strategies to increase the brand’s distribution among key markets nationwide. This includes capitalizing on the company’s commitment to the brand, including $250 million in corporate investments and other financial-based incentives aimed to fuel the brand’s growth, primarily in urban markets. Shalala has over 16 years of hospitality development and franchise sales experience. Prior to joining Choice, Shalala served as senior director of development at Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide and was responsible for the strategic growth of Starwood’s nine upscale and luxury lifestyle brands in the southeastern United States and the Caribbean. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business and sports management from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.
**STACY SHOEMAKER RAUEN**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF  
HOSPITALITY DESIGN MAGAZINE

Stacy Shoemaker Rauen is a well-respected and talented editor and writer, and is the editor in chief for *Hospitality Design (HD)* magazine, the leading publication for the industry. Besides overseeing the content and direction of the magazine, Rauen is a noted speaker at industry events, and as an avid tracker of trends, places, projects, and people, she puts together panels at HD’s conferences, and has been quoted in various respected media outlets including CNBC and the *Washington Post*. She also is the founder of HD’s CitySCENE, a networking event series held in metropolitan areas throughout the United States and internationally, meant to connect design professionals in each market, as well as NextGen Forum, a conference for the next generation of hospitality design leaders. She holds two degrees from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism, including a master’s degree in journalism.

**NOAH J. SILVERMAN**  
CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, NORTH AMERICA FULL SERVICE HOTELS  
MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

Noah J. Silverman is chief development officer, North America full-service hotels for Marriott International. He is responsible for overseeing all aspects of the development process in the United States and Canada for the Marriott, JW Marriott, Renaissance, Delta, Gaylord, Ritz-Carlton, EDITION, and Bulgari brands, and the Autograph Collection.

Prior to his current role, Silverman served as senior vice president of global asset management, where he led Marriott’s asset management efforts on a worldwide basis. Before that, he was senior vice president of development asset management, providing overall leadership in managing hotel deals from the time a transaction is signed through opening. Silverman also served as senior vice president of project finance, where he led a variety of complex transactions, including seeking outside investors to own Marriott’s company-owned hotels subject to long-term management agreements.

Silverman joined Marriott in July 1997 in the Marriott law department. In June 2002, he became vice president of global asset management, where he negotiated transactions to preserve and enhance the stability and value of Marriott’s long-term management and franchise agreements. Prior to joining Marriott, Silverman was an associate with the law firm of Covington & Burling in Washington, DC. He holds an AB from Princeton University and a JD from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

**SIMON SINEK**  
AUTHOR AND OPTIMIST  
START WITH WHY

Simon Sinek is an optimist. He believes in a bright future and our ability to build it together. Described as “a visionary thinker with a rare intellect,” Sinek teaches leaders and organizations how to inspire people. With a bold goal to help build a world in which the vast majority of people go home every day feeling fulfilled by their work, Sinek is leading a movement to inspire people to do the things that inspire them.

A trained ethnographer, he is the author of two books: the global bestseller, *Start With Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action*, and his newest book, *Leaders Eat Last: Why Some Teams Pull Together and Others Don’t*. He is best known for popularizing the concept of why and for the talk he gave on the subject that became the third most-watched talk of all time on TED.com.

Sinek’s unconventional and innovative views on business and leadership have attracted international attention and have earned him invitations to meet with an array of leaders and organizations, including 3M, Deckers, HSM, KPMG, Pfizer, NBC/Universal, jetBlue, the military, government agencies, and entrepreneurs. Sinek also has had the honor of presenting his ideas at the United Nations, the United States Congress, and to the senior leadership of the United States Air Force.

Sinek is an adjunct staff member of the RAND Corporation, one of the most highly regarded think tanks in the world. He also is active in the arts and not-for-profit world, working with charity: water, an organization devoted to helping bring clean water to the over 700 million people around the world who don’t yet have it, and he serves on the board of the Tami Stronach Dance Company.
J. ALLEN SMITH
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FOUR SEASONS HOTELS AND RESORTS

J. Allen Smith is president and chief executive officer of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts and oversees all aspects of the company’s global portfolio of hotels, resorts, and branded residences.

Responsible for advancing Four Seasons’ position as the world’s leading luxury hospitality company, Smith guides the overall direction and strategic priorities of the organization, while growing Four Seasons’ presence and leadership in the world’s most important travel destinations.

Since joining Four Seasons in 2013, Smith has led the development and execution of the company’s strategy with a long-term view to creating shareholder and hotel owner value, while protecting and strengthening Four Seasons’ competitive advantages and extending the brand’s legendary culture of service to new markets.

Prior to joining Four Seasons, Smith served as CEO of Prudential Real Estate Investors (PREI), one of the world’s largest real estate investment managers. A graduate of Cornell University, Smith holds a bachelor’s degree in sociology and a Master of Professional Studies (MPS) from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

RICHARD A. SMITH
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
FELCOR LODGING TRUST

Since his appointment as FelCor’s president and chief executive officer in February 2006, Richard A. Smith has led the company’s successful repositioning program, which improved the overall quality and growth profile of its hotel portfolio. In addition, Smith planned and executed the strategy to restructure FelCor’s balance sheet with enhanced strength and flexibility to thrive throughout industry and economic cycles.

Prior to joining FelCor in 2004 as executive vice president and chief financial officer, Smith was most recently executive vice president and chief financial officer of Wyndham International, where he was responsible for that company’s financial strategy and operations, having joined Wyndham in September 1999 as senior vice president and treasurer. Smith also previously worked for Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide, Atlantic Richfield Company, and Coopers & Lybrand.

Smith is a certified public accountant. He serves on the national corporate development committee of Autism Speaks and on the travel advisory board of Active International, and he is a member of the World Presidents’ Organization. He also serves as a member of the advisory board of governors of the National Association of Real Estate Investment Trusts. Smith graduated from the University of Tennessee where he earned a Bachelor of Science in accounting and business law.

RICHARD SOLOMONS
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL GROUP (IHG)

Richard Solomons has been chief executive officer of InterContinental Hotel Group (IHG) since July 2011. He is responsible for implementing IHG’s strategy of building a portfolio of preferred hotel brands. During his tenure as CEO, Solomons has led the continued growth of IHG, including the launch of its two newest brands, HUALUXE Hotels and Resorts and EVEN Hotels. In January 2015, Solomons led the acquisition of Kimpton Hotels & Restaurants, the world’s largest independent boutique hotel business, making IHG the clear market leader in the boutique segment.

Before being appointed CEO, Solomons served as chief financial officer and head of commercial development at IHG. Solomons was integral in shaping and implementing IHG’s asset light strategy, which has helped the business grow significantly since it was formed in 2003, as well as supporting the return of $10.5 billion to shareholders. As CFO, Solomons also was responsible for the group’s financial affairs and investor relations. In 2008, he also served as interim president of the company’s Americas business.

Solomons first joined Bass (later Six Continent), the company from which IHG emerged, in 1992. He subsequently held a number of senior roles in the business including chief operating officer of the Americas hotels division, before being appointed finance director of the company in March 2003. In this role, he oversaw the separation of IHG from Six Continents later in 2003 and the IPO of the Britvic soft drinks division in late 2005.

Prior to joining IHG, Solomons worked in investment banking for seven years with Hill Samuel Bank, based in New York and London. He is a qualified chartered accountant, a member of the Industry Real Estate Financing Advisory Council, and a governor of the Aviation and Travel Industry Group of the World Economic Forum. In April 2015, Solomons was appointed as a non-executive director to the board of Marks and Spencer Group.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:

TODD E. SOLOWAY
PARTNER
PRYOR CASHMAN

Todd E. Soloway chairs Pryor Cashman’s real estate litigation practice and co-heads the hotel and hospitality practice. Soloway’s work on sophisticated real estate finance and transactions, his extensive experience as a trial lawyer, and his practical, business-oriented approach make him a sought-after adviser to the hospitality industry. His clients include Eden Roc, H.I.G. Realty Partners, Highgate Hotels, Setai Hotels, and The Trump Organization, among others.

Soloway’s hospitality litigation practice addresses issues related to development and construction, management and operations, employment, complex financing, foreclosure actions, and intellectual property. On the transactional side, he advises on and negotiates agreements regarding hotel management, purchases and sales, technical services, and finance, leasing, and construction. Soloway also has represented Spanish and Latin American real estate investors and developers in connection with complex real estate transactions and international litigation.

SUE SPINNEY
SENIOR DIRECTOR OF MARKET MANAGEMENT
EXPEDIA

Susan Spinney leads the Expedia lodging team, working closely with nearly 6,800 properties throughout New York (including New York City), New England, and Canada, helping partners to build their visibility, increase guest interest, and drive bookings through the many brands of Expedia. As part of her role as senior director, Spinney also helps to develop and align the strategic initiative with the product and technology teams who enhance Expedia’s partner facing tools and support.

Spinney joined Expedia in 2001, where she played a key role in the launch of the Hotels.com brand and the merging of Hotels.com and Expedia. She has held management roles across the company including director of planning, hotel sales in Dallas and director of market management for Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. Prior to Expedia, Spinney held management, sales, and product management positions at various travel companies including Air Jamaica Vacations, Globetrotters, and Lowestfare.com.

ARNE SORENSON
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
MARRIOTT INTERNATIONAL

Arne Sorenson is president and chief executive officer of Marriott International, a global leading lodging company with more than 4,300 lodging properties in 85 countries and territories and reported revenue of more than $14 billion in fiscal year 2014.

Previously, Sorenson was Marriott’s president and chief operating officer. Earlier, he served as executive vice president, chief financial officer, and president of Continental European Lodging.

Sorenson was elected to Marriott International’s board of directors in 2011. In January 2015, he was elected chair of the Brand USA board. He also serves as vice chair of the President’s Export Council and the Luther College board of regents. In April 2015, he was elected to the board of trustees for the Brookings Institution. Prior to joining Marriott in 1996, Sorenson was a partner with the law firm Latham & Watkins in Washington, DC.

JAY STEIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
DREAM HOTEL GROUP

Jay Stein is DREAM Hotel Group’s chief executive officer, overseeing the company’s evolution and expansion efforts.

With over three decades in the hospitality business and over 20 years with DREAM Hotel Group’s predecessor, Hampshire Hotels Management, Stein has served in a variety of property and corporate roles with both large and boutique hotel brands including Hilton Worldwide, Starwood Hotels & Resorts, and Doral Hotels.

Stein began his career in 1983 with Hilton Worldwide at the Vista International Hotel in the World Trade Center in New York City. A veteran of food and beverage management, he turned his sights to general hotel operations and eventually became the managing director for three Doral Hotels in New York City. After taking those properties through the transition to Starwood Hotels and Resorts, he then joined Hampshire Hotels Management as executive vice president of operations. He was soon promoted to chief operating officer, overseeing hotel operations and playing a vital role in the hotel group’s expansion efforts.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:

YUVAL TAL
PARTNER AND OFFICE HEAD, HONG KONG AND BEIJING PROSKAUER ROSE

Yuval Tal is a partner and the head of Hong Kong and Beijing offices of the international law firm Proskauer Rose. He is a general corporate and securities lawyer with diverse experience in cross-border mergers and acquisitions, securities offerings, and corporate and real estate finance.

Tal is a member of the firm’s lodging and gaming and private equity real estate groups. He has over 20 years of experience in the hospitality and real estate sectors. Notably, he led the team advising AccorHotels on its strategic long-term alliance with Huazhu Hotels Group. He also is representing Accor on its $2.9 billion acquisition of FRHI Hotels & Resorts, which owns three luxury hotel brands: Raffles, Fairmont, and Swissôtel.

Tal holds an LLB from Hebrew University in Jerusalem and an LLB and JSD from the University of Chicago. He clerked for the former chief justice of the Supreme Court of Israel, Meir Shamgar.

DAVIN THIGPEN
MANAGING DIRECTOR, REAL ESTATE AND LODGING INVESTMENT BANKING
J.P. MORGAN

Davin Thigpen is a managing director in J.P. Morgan’s real estate and lodging investment banking group. He is active in strategic advisory transactions and debt and equity capital raising activities for companies in the real estate, lodging, and timeshare industries. He has worked at J.P. Morgan (and its predecessor Bear, Stearns & Co.) since 2003. Prior to that, Thigpen worked in the management consulting division of PricewaterhouseCoopers. Thigpen earned his BBA from Southern Methodist University and his MBA from Columbia Business School.

RENE J. THERIAULT
MANAGING DIRECTOR
GOLDMAN, SACHS & CO.

Rene J. Theriault is a managing director at Goldman Sachs within its real estate financing group (REFG), which deploys the firm’s balance sheet on mortgage and mezzanine commercial real estate lending opportunities. RFG is responsible for the firm’s new-issue commercial mortgage-backed securities business as well as a significant portfolio of first mortgage loans originated for Goldman Sachs Bank USA.

Theriault is RFG’s head of large loan origination and his primary responsibilities include originating and structuring large complex mortgage and mezzanine financings for sophisticated sponsor and REIT clients.

Theriault serves on the board of governors of the Commercial Real Estate Finance Council, the primary trade organization for the commercial real estate finance industry, and previously served as chair of its Issuer’s Forum. Theriault earned a BA in economics from the University of Virginia and a JD from Harvard Law School.

RAJIV K. TRIVEDI
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
LA QUINTA INNS & SUITES

Rajiv K. Trivedi is a senior hotel and franchising executive with 29 years of experience in the hospitality industry who is best known for his active and dynamic management style. He is responsible for all facets of franchising, including sales, services, and administration, and he also has significant experience in franchising and development outside the hotel industry. He spearheaded the growth of the system to 540 franchised properties in his tenure—an unprecedented growth rate in the hotel industry.

In November 2000, Trivedi joined La Quinta as vice president of franchise operations, where he was responsible for designing and implementing the company’s franchising program, managing franchise sales, services, administration, and training. He was promoted to senior franchise development officer in 2004 and, upon the acquisition of La Quinta by an affiliate of the Blackstone Group, was promoted to his current position as executive vice president. In February 2009, he also was named chief development officer.
SIMON M. TURNER
PRESIDENT, GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT
STARWOOD HOTELS & RESORTS WORLDWIDE

Simon M. Turner is responsible for global development activities including property acquisitions and dispositions, and franchise and management growth. Previously, Turner was principal of a hotel investment advisory and asset management firm representing a high-net-worth Middle East investor, and prior to that, served on the board of directors of Four Seasons Hotels and Fairmont Raffles Hotels International. Earlier in his career, Turner held positions at Salomon Brothers, Pannell Kerr Forster, and Gustar Hoteliers.

Turner is a trustee of the Urban Land Institute, a member of ULI’s Greenprint Center for Building Performance advisory board, a member of the Real Estate Roundtable, and a past member of the dean’s advisory board of the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

NATE TYRRELL
MANAGING DIRECTOR, INVESTMENTS
HOST HOTELS & RESORTS

Nate Tyrrell is managing director, investments for Host Hotels & Resorts, an S&P 500 and Fortune 500 company and the largest lodging real estate investment trust. He is responsible for the company’s investment activities in the eastern half of the United States and in Latin America. Since joining the company in 2005, he has worked on numerous real estate and financing transactions in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia. Prior to his current role, he served as the company’s treasurer. Before joining Host, Tyrrell worked in finance and development at the Rouse Company in Columbia, Maryland and in investment banking at Alex Brown in Baltimore and London.

Tyrrell is a graduate of Harvard Business School and Harvard College.

HOMI VAZIFDAR
MANAGING DIRECTOR
CANYON EQUITY

Homi Vazifdar is the managing director of the Canyon Group. The Canyon Group owns and develops ultra-luxury resorts in exotic destinations around the world. The company currently owns assets in Europe, North America, Latin America, and the South Pacific. The Canyon Group’s resorts are managed by marquis brands such as Amanresorts and Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

Vazifdar is extremely passionate about the wonderful world of lodging. Over the years, he has touched almost every aspect of the industry and has worked with some of the stalwarts in the business. He is a frequent speaker at lodging and tourism conferences around the world and has over 25 years of multifaceted lodging and hospitality experience, ranging from development and design to investment banking. Before founding Canyon Equity in 2005, he was the global head of lodging at Banc of America Securities in San Francisco where he was involved in numerous high-profile transactions.

MARCEL VERBAAS
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
XENIA HOTELS & RESORTS

Marcel Verbaas is president and chief executive officer of Xenia Hotels & Resorts and has held this position with Xenia or its affiliated entities since 2007. Verbaas also has served as a director of Xenia since August 2014. From December 2004 to the successful sale of the company in April 2007, Verbaas was senior vice president and chief investment officer for CNL Hotels & Resorts, a real estate investment trust. In that capacity, he was responsible for the company’s investment activities, acquisitions, and dispositions. Verbaas served as senior vice president and chief investment officer for CNL Retirement Corporation from June 2003 to December 2004, during which time he oversaw more than $2.5 billion in acquisitions in the seniors housing and medical office segments.

From 2000 to 2003, Verbaas held the positions of vice president of real estate finance and senior vice president of project finance with CNL Hospitality Corporation, the former adviser to CNL Hotel and Resorts. Prior to joining CNL in 2000, Verbaas served as director of corporate finance for Stormont Trice Development Corporation, a private hotel development company. Verbaas also held positions in real estate finance with GE Capital Corporation and Ocwen Financial Corporation where he primarily focused on the financing of lodging properties. Verbaas earned his master’s degree in business economics from Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands.
BRUCE D. WARDINSKI
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
PLAYA HOTELS & RESORTS

Bruce D. Wardinski is the chairman and chief executive officer of Playa Hotels & Resorts (Playa). Playa is the owner of all-inclusive resorts located in Mexico and the Caribbean. Wardinski has served in his current position since founding Playa in early 2006.

Previously, Wardinski was CEO of Barcelo Crestline Corporation; chairman, president, and CEO of Crestline Capital Corporation; and senior vice president and treasurer of Host Marriott Corporation, as well as serving in various other capacities with Host Marriott and Marriott Corporation.

Wardinski currently serves as chairman of the ServiceSource Foundation, serves on the board of directors of the Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts, is a member of the George Mason University Foundation board of trustees, and is a member of the James Madison University College of Business board of advisors. Wardinski serves as a director of DiamondRock Hospitality Company and previously served as director of privately owned international resort company Kerzner International. Wardinski graduated with honors from the University of Virginia with a BS in commerce and earned an MBA in finance from The Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

GLENN WASSERMAN
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT AND CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
DENIHAN INVESTMENTS

Glenn Wasserman oversees the financial strategy for Denihan Investments, including all accounting, asset management, strategic planning, capital markets, and investor relations. He also works closely with the company’s development team in identifying, evaluating, and securing capital to fund Denihan’s growth strategy.

Wasserman previously served as executive vice president of capital markets and strategic planning for RXR Realty, a New York real estate operating company. There, he executed over $12 billion of capital markets activities during his 10-year tenure and served on the executive, operating, and investment committees. He joined Reckson Associates Realty Corporation (predecessor to RXR) as senior vice president of strategic planning in 2004, where he developed corporate and operating strategies, including property level five-year forecasting, business planning, and reporting processes.

Glenn earned his BS from the State University of New York at Albany and MBA from the NYU Stern School of Business.

RICHARD WARNICK
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND CO-CHAIR
CHMWARNICK

Richard Warnick is co-founder and managing director of CHMWarnick, the leading provider of hospitality asset management and strategic advisory services to the hospitality industry. The company asset manages over 50 hotels comprising approximately 23,000 rooms valued at roughly $10 billion. CHMWarnick’s advisory services cover virtually every aspect of the hospitality industry and all phases of a hotel’s life cycle, including ground-up development and repositioning. The company is currently providing development advisory services for hotel and resort projects valued at over $3 billion. CHMWarnick has offices in Boston, New York City, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Fort Lauderdale, Denver, Minneapolis, and Honolulu.

JEFF WEINSTEIN
EDITOR IN CHIEF
HOTELS MAGAZINE/HOTELS’ INVESTMENT OUTLOOK

Jeff Weinstein has been editor in chief of HOTELS magazine since November 1994. In 1996, he created HOTELS’ Investment Outlook, a quarterly publication for the hotel investment community. He also is responsible for developing the HOTELS website, hotelsmag.com. Starting in 1986, Weinstein was senior editor for Restaurants & Institutions, which covered all aspects of the foodservice industry in the United States. Weinstein, a five-time winner of the Jesse H. Neal Award presented by the American Business Press, is a journalism graduate of Drake University.
SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

38TH ANNUAL NYU INTERNATIONAL HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY INVESTMENT CONFERENCE:

ADAM F. WEISSENBERG
GLOBAL TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY, AND LEISURE LEADER
DELOITTE

Adam F. Weissenberg is the global leader of the travel, hospitality, and leisure (THL) segment at Deloitte. Weissenberg heads the strategic direction and operational execution, and serves as a senior adviser to many of Deloitte’s largest Fortune 500 hospitality, gaming, and food service clients.

Based in New York, Weissenberg is a preeminent spokesperson on travel and hospitality trends. He is quoted regularly in national publications including The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, Forbes, Condé Nast, and Travel + Leisure. He also has been a guest on CNBC, Fox Business News, and Bloomberg.

With over 20 years in the THL marketplace, Weissenberg speaks frequently at conferences including the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) and the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference, where he serves on the steering committee. He is a frequent speaker at the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration and he serves on the Center for Hospitality Research advisory board. In 2012, Weissenberg was named one of the top 90 influential hotelies from the Cornell University School of Hotel Administration.

Outside of Deloitte, Weissenberg serves on the board and audit committee of the UJA of New York and as chairman of the board and CEO of The Cancer Hope Network. Weissenberg earned a BS from Cornell University in hotel and restaurant administration, and an MBA from Columbia University where he majored in accounting and finance.

BENJAMIN WEPRIN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
AJ CAPITAL PARTNERS

Benjamin Weprin is the founder and chief executive officer of Adventurous Journeys Capital Partners based in Chicago, Illinois. Founded in 2008, AJ Capital Partners is a dynamic organization of counterculture hospitality and real estate investors with the collective goals of acquiring, repositioning, and developing highly sought-after hospitality assets and prestigious resort destinations throughout the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean. In 2014, Weprin launched the Graduate Hotels brand—a hotel collection targeting university towns across the country that celebrates each town’s local culture and history.


Weprin is a graduate of the University of Tennessee and holds an MBA from Northwestern University’s Kellogg School of Management. He also serves on the board of directors of Auberge Resorts.

ANDREW WHARTON
MANAGING DIRECTOR
REH CAPITAL PARTNERS

Andrew Wharton is a managing director of REH Capital Partners, based in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Wharton has extensive experience providing clients with owner’s representation, operations performance improvement, litigation support, expert testimony, and transactional services within the hospitality and real estate industries.

Wharton has over 30 years of diversified operational, accounting, and finance experience in the real estate and hospitality industries with an emphasis on hotels, resorts, cruise lines, developers, and construction companies. Prior to joining REH in February 2012, Wharton was managing director at KPMG in the hospitality and real estate services practice, providing advisory services to a wide variety of real estate and hospitality clients. Prior to KPMG, Wharton was chief financial officer of ResidenSea, where he provided overall leadership in the areas of finance, control, and operations of this developer and operator of a first-of-its-kind luxury “resort at sea.” The World, that featured privately owned residential units, rental suites, spa, casino, and other amenities. Prior to ResidenSea, Wharton was a senior manager in KPMG’s national real estate and hospitality practice where he held various positions over his tenure with the firm. Wharton is a certified public accountant with a Bachelor of Science in accounting and finance from Florida State University.

JEREMY WELTER
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT OF ASSET MANAGEMENT
ASHFORD

Jeremy Welter is the executive vice president of asset management for Ashford and serves as the executive vice president of asset management for both Ashford Hospitality Trust and Ashford Hospitality Prime. Welter is responsible for asset performance, capital investments, long-term strategic market positioning, risk management, property leases, property taxes, and underwriting for all hotels with advisory agreements with Ashford. From August 2005 until December 2010, Welter was employed by Remington Hotels in various capacities, most recently serving as chief financial officer. He is a current member of the Marriott and Hilton owner advisory councils. From July 2000 through July 2005, Welter was an investment banker at Stephens, where he worked on mergers and acquisitions, public and private equity and debt, capital raises, company valuations, fairness opinions, and recapitalizations. Before working at Stephens, Welter was part of Bank of America’s global corporate investment banking group. Welter is a speaker and panelist for various lodging investment and development conferences, including the NYU International Hospitality Industry Investment Conference. Welter earned his Bachelor of Science in business administration and economics from Oklahoma State University, where he served as student body president and graduated summa cum laude.
**PAUL M. WHYTE**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR AND GLOBAL CO-HEAD OF REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT BANKING  
CREDIT SUISSE  

Paul M. Whyte is a managing director of Credit Suisse in the investment banking division, based in New York City. He is the global co-head of real estate investment banking, and joined Credit Suisse in 2010. Prior to that, he was the co-head of real estate, lodging, and gaming at Deutsche Bank. His client focus includes both public and private real estate, lodging, and gaming companies, for which he provides strategic advice and capital raising ideas.

During his 23 years in investment banking, he has participated in over $80 billion of M&A transactions and raised over $100 billion of capital for notable clients such as Blackstone ($27 billion Hilton and $39 billion EOP LBOs), Harrah’s ($26 billion LBO and $9.5 billion acquisition of Caesars), MGM Mirage ($9 billion Mandalay Bay and $6 billion Mirage acquisitions), Starwood Hotels ($4.2 billion portfolio sale), and Wynn Resorts ($450 million IPO and $2.4 billion initial capitalization). Whyte holds a BS from Purdue University and an MBA from the University of North Carolina.

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**ROBERT WINCHESTER**  
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER  
WATERFORD HOTEL GROUP  

Robert Winchester is the president and chief operating officer of Waterford Hotel Group. His responsibilities at Waterford include all aspects of ongoing operations for the firm, including all facets of operating the hotels currently under management. Additionally, Winchester develops and maintains relationships with potential institutional, financial, and individual partners to grow the company’s third-party management portfolio. Under his direction, Waterford Hotel Group has developed a reputation for delivering on time, within budget, and exceeding client expectations. Whether the involvement begins at conception or during operation, the team strives for successful performance and profitability of each property, while maintaining the highest standards of service and excellence. His combination of operations, sales, and finance expertise translates into efficient and optimally profitable results. Winchester joined the organization in 1990 and has more than 30 years of professional experience in the hospitality industry, including an extensive background in finance, acquisition, and disposition. Winchester holds a Bachelor of Science in accounting from the University of Connecticut.

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**ROBERT E. WIEMER, JR.**  
MANAGING DIRECTOR  
THE PLASENCIA GROUP  

Robert E. Wiemer, Jr. leads investment sales for The Plasencia Group across North America. Since joining The Plasencia Group in 1994, Wiemer has earned an outstanding reputation among his peers for coordinating the disposition of over $2 billion in hospitality assets to date. Notable projects include the sale of the DoubleTree New Orleans, New Orleans Embassy Suites, Houston Intercontinental Airport Sheraton, Hilton Garden Inn Dallas Market Center, and a number of full-service portfolios.

Wiemer often consults with clients on acquisitions, debt and equity placement, and development management. He is esteemed among the industry for helping to guide an emerging generation of hospitality investment professionals into their own successful careers. He often serves on industry panels and is regularly consulted by hospitality and real estate industry leaders, journalists, and other experts alike. Wiemer graduated from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge with a bachelor’s degree in economics and a Master of Business Administration.

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**LAWRENCE B. WOLFE**  
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR  
EASTDIL SECURED  

Lawrence B. Wolfe is a senior managing director with Eastdil Secured where he is the senior member of the firm’s lodging brokerage team. In his 25-year career at Eastdil Secured, Wolfe has completed over $200 billion of property sales, debt placements, and M&A advisory on behalf of the industry’s leading REITs, c-corps, private equity firms, high-net-worth investors, and sovereign wealth funds.

The firm continues to focus on advising public and private owners of resorts and hotels on debt and equity recapitalization options. In addition to property sales, mortgage brokerage, and sub-debt sales, Eastdil Secured (through Wells Fargo Securities) acts as a book-runner on public equity and debt offerings. In 2007, Wolfe was honored as the recipient of the Jack A. Shaffer Financial Adviser of the Year Award.

Wolfe is a graduate of The Johns Hopkins University from which he earned economics and engineering degrees and the University of Chicago from which he earned an MBA in finance.
LEN WOLMAN
CHAIRMAN AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
WATERFORD GROUP

Len Wolman is the chairman and chief executive officer of Waterford Group. Under his leadership, Waterford has established itself as a leading company in the hospitality industry by developing and operating hotel, gaming, and venue properties totaling more than $3 billion throughout the United States. Waterford has gained unparalleled experience in the hospitality industry through the development, ownership, and/or management of more than 80 hotels, 9,500 guest rooms, 700,000 square feet of convention and meeting space, and numerous dining establishments.

Wolman currently serves on the executive boards for the Connecticut Science Center, Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce, Connecticut Tourism Advisory Council, and New York University's Friends of the Tisch Center for Hospitality and Tourism. He holds a National Diploma in hotel management from the Hotel School of Technikon Witwatersrand in South Africa, and serves as a member of the board of governors for the University of Johannesburg and a board member of University of Johannesburg’s School of Tourism and Hospitality.

R. MARK WOODWORTH
SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR
CBRE HOTELS’ AMERICAS RESEARCH

R. Mark Woodworth, based in Atlanta, is senior managing director of CBRE Hotels’ Americas Research and responsible for the firm’s national practice. Woodworth formed their predecessor firm (PKF-HR) in 1999 with Cornell University’s Jack Corgel. He has advised the industry’s leading lenders, developers, chains, and management companies.

Woodworth has been quoted on hospitality issues in such noted publications as The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today, Financial Times, and numerous industry publications. He is a frequent speaker at industry conferences, is a Dean’s Distinguished Lecturer at Cornell University, and a member of the Conference of Business Economists. He serves on the board of directors of the Atlanta Convention & Visitors Bureau and the finance committee of the United Way of Metropolitan Atlanta. He holds both a bachelor’s degree and master’s degree in hotel administration from Cornell University.

TODD G. WYNNE-PARRY
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT,
GLOBAL ACQUISITIONS AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMUNE HOTELS + RESORTS/DESTINATION HOTELS

In his role as executive vice president of global acquisitions and development for the newly merged Destination Hotels and Commune Hotels + Resorts, Todd G. Wynne-Parry oversees the company’s global business growth efforts, including sourcing and securing new management contracts and investment opportunities.

The impact of his 30-year career in the hospitality industry has spanned continents through his senior leadership positions at some of the world’s best-known hotel companies. Wynne-Parry has lived and worked in the United States, Asia, Australia, and the United Kingdom and led the development efforts for IhG, Starwood, and Marriott in the Asia-Pacific region and for the Trump Hotel Collection globally.

Wynne-Parry earned an MBA from Thunderbird Graduate School of International Management (Glendale, Arizona) and a BA from Alma College (Alma, Michigan). Wynne-Parry also studied briefly as an undergraduate at Scotland’s University of Aberdeen and now serves on the university’s board of directors for the US Development Trust.

ALEX ZOZAYA
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
APPLE LEISURE GROUP

As chief executive officer of Apple Leisure Group, Alex Zozaya applies more than 30 years of industry expertise to optimize the global synergies between six hospitality companies: Apple Vacations, Travel Impressions, CheapCaribbean.com, AMResorts, Amstar dmc, and Unlimited Vacation Club. Under Zozaya’s leadership, ALG has quickly become the world’s number-one provider of North American leisure travelers to Mexico and the Caribbean, delivering over two million guests annually.

Prior to establishing ALG’s resort brand management company, AMResorts, in 2001, Zozaya held senior positions at Fiesta Americana Hotels & Resorts, where he directed all commercial activities for Latin America's largest hotel consortium. Zozaya’s outstanding contributions to the international hotel business have earned him numerous industry accolades. Expansion has included Zozaya on its list of the 100 most important and influential business people in Mexico for the last five years, and Zozaya’s distinctions for hospitality excellence include “Hotelier of the Year” and the Diamante Award.