

LUXURY HOTELIERS

1st Quarter
2018

SMALL
LUXURY
HOTELS
OF THE WORLD
TRAVEL TRENDS
2018

Q&A: TOM MCALPIN
PRESIDENT & CEO VIRGIN VOYAGES

SPOTLIGHT ON

Robert Cima

Regional VP and GM,
Four Seasons Hotel
Westlake Village,
California



ILHA INSPIRE'17
*Summit
Report Back*

CONTENTS

Luxury Hoteliers magazine is a collaborative venture with the International Luxury Hotel Association's dynamic community of hospitality professionals interested in sharing their incredible knowledge of trends, industry intelligence and inspiration.

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[in Hospitality & Travel Industry Group](#)

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06

SPOTLIGHT ON
ROBERT CIMA
Regional Vice President & General Manager, Four Seasons Hotel Westlake Village, California
Leading Wellness in hospitality with a medical facility, wellness kitchen, and more



10

SPOTLIGHT ON

Do Van Dan

Founder & CEO of Elegance Hospitality Group, Vietnam
A journey from Receptionist to CEO, the philosophy behind his success



14

SPOTLIGHT ON

Sandra Tikal

COO ENSHAA Hospitality Division & General Manager, Palazzo Versace Dubai
The inspiration behind the project, being a part of the Versace team, and intuitive service



20

SPOTLIGHT ON
Winfred van Workum

General Manager

The Ritz Carlton New York, Central Park

Breaking ADR and REVPAR goals while keeping both employees and guests engaged



24

SPOTLIGHT ON
Clarence McLeod

General Manager of
Azuridge Estate Hotel

North America's only Guided Butler schools the art of service



30

ABOUT

Hospitality News from around the World



SPOTLIGHT ON

Do Van Dan

*Founder & CEO of Elegance Hospitality Group
Vietnam*

By Sharon Hirschowitz

A true story of simple beginnings, hard work and a passion for the hotel world that started with a Receptionist position in a 4-star hotel in Hanoi. Do Van Dan understands the importance of guest experience and places it at the core of their philosophy.

I BELIEVE THAT YOU STARTED WITH A 10-BEDROOM PROPERTY IN HANOI'S OLD QUARTER IN 2006 AND NOW HAVE A SUCCESSFUL LUXURY BOUTIQUE HOTEL CHAIN IN VIETNAM. CAN YOU TAKE US THROUGH YOUR JOURNEY?

I guess you could say that my journey has been a classic tale of rags to riches. I was born into a poor farming family just outside Hanoi. Although my father worked very hard to support my mother and my siblings, there was not a lot of spare money around to fund our studies. As such, I had to work long hours in a series of part-time jobs to save money. I even gave up my dream of becoming an architect because I could not afford the university fees. As I was working in hotels, I could

see the huge potential for growth of a quality product in Hanoi and that became my focus. Eventually, I managed to save enough money to invest in a small property in the Old Quarter and the business has blossomed from there. I am pleased to say that we are now one of the most successful hotel chains in Vietnam with seven boutique hotels in Hanoi and one luxury resort in Hoi An.

WHAT DO YOU BELIEVE HAS BEEN THE SECRET TO YOUR SUCCESS?

I believe that every successful business has a fundamental core philosophy. And for EHG, it is the goal of attaining perfection in customer service. Happy visitors are vital to our growth and that's something I've focused on from the very beginning. By getting to know our guests personally and listening to their feedback -- both positive and negative -- I believe that we have attained a level of customer service that we can be justifiably proud of. The level of competition in the hotel sector in Hanoi is intense so we can't (and won't) let our standards slip even just slightly.



WHAT IS YOUR LEADERSHIP STYLE?

Although I think it is important to demonstrate strong leadership, I also believe that a consultative style of management can achieve better results. We care about our people and make sure that they are provided with a great working environment. Our employees have opportunities to better themselves as part of close-knit family. We have many long-standing employees and we all share a united vision for a more successful business in the future.

HOW HAVE YOU CREATED CUSTOMIZED EXPERIENCES FOR YOUR GUESTS?

Hanoi is a hugely multi-faceted city with different products to suit different types of guests. Most visitors want to get under



WHAT ARE GUESTS LOOKING FOR WHEN THEY CHOOSE YOUR HOTEL?

Our hotels offer upscale, intimate environments in some of the best locations in Hanoi's historic Old Quarter so we are at an advantage from the start. Overall, though, I think it is our customer service that has won us the most new and repeat business. We care about our customers. I'm a firm believer in the adage "no detail too small, no request too big". For us, "no details small, no requests big". After over a decade of evolution, we have achieved some excellent results, but we must never take anything for granted. The attainment of perfection is an ongoing process.



the skin of one of the most fascinating destinations in Asia. We can help them do this in several ways. We run immersive food tours and cooking classes that encompass market visits and simple, delicious local recipes. Our F&B outlets, meanwhile, are renowned for the high standard of Vietnamese cuisine. Additionally, guests can reap the benefits of local knowledge from our expert staff. For those who prefer to take things easy, our hotels offer excellent spa and leisure facilities as well as spacious, comfortable rooms equipped with hi-tech audio-visual technology.

