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BRIEFS

Cushman & Wakefield closes on Sonnenblick Goldman acquisition

Sonnenblick Goldman is now officially a part of Cushman & Wakefield, as C&W has closed on the acquisition of the real estate investment banking firm. As a result, Sonnenblick Goldman will now operate as Cushman & Wakefield Sonnenblick Goldman.

The six principals of Sonnenblick Goldman will continue on at the new entity and will continue to maintain a significant ownership position in the group. Mark Gordon will be the executive vp and head of C&W's hospitality group in the U.S. Steve Kohn will be the president of Cushman & Wakefield Sonnenblick Goldman. Tom MacManus will be the chairman and CEO of the new entity.

The acquisition is designed to expand C&W's global capital markets platform.

Ritz-Carlton Dallas set to open

The Ritz-Carlton, Dallas is slated to open on Aug. 15 in the Uptown area of Dallas. The 218-room Ritz-Carlton is located in a new 21-story Regency-style building designed by Robert A.M. Stern Architects. It is situated on McKinney Avenue, a shopping, dining and entertainment enclave.

It will feature what will be reportedly the largest luxury ballroom in Dallas, a 12,000-square-foot Ritz-Carlton Spa and Fearing's Restaurant, which will be created by celebrity chef Dean Fearing. Seventy Residences at the Ritz-Carlton will occupy the block-wide complex, a project of Fort Worth-based Crescent Real Estate Equities Co.



Starwood Hotels & Resorts is revamping its Sheraton brand through such areas as the guestroom.

Change is common thread among leading franchisors

BY STEFANI C. O'CONNOR

NATIONAL REPORT— Most major franchise companies stand as pillars of aspiration for those looking to enter the lodging industry, stalwart purveyors of hopes and dreams that offer stability for the long run and opportunity for the short run.

But as in any industry that is doing well— and lodging has experienced record profitability now for several years running— success brings change and some of those changes, including acquisitions, sell-offs, executive power shifts, new brands and brand expansions, have helped alter the complexion of several U.S. franchise chains,

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Schultz back at ICD Publications

EAST SETAUKET, NY— Jay Schultz has rejoined ICD Publications, the parent company of HOTEL BUSINESS®, as senior vp of ICD's Hospitality Group.

Schultz spent more than 14 years with ICD Publications and most recently as publisher of HOTEL BUSINESS® prior



Jay Schultz
Senior VP
ICD Hospitality Group

to leaving the company in June 2006 to become publisher of Hospitality Design, a Nielsen Business Media publication.

In his new position, Schultz oversees ICD's Hospitality Group, which includes

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Owners' outlook Hilton platform works

BY BRUCE SERLEN

NATIONAL REPORT— In the weeks immediately following last month's surprise announcement that the Blackstone Group would take Hilton Hotels Corp. private in a deal valued at \$26 billion, owners of Hilton-branded hotels reacted with a mix of concern and cautious optimism.

They were satisfied with the direction that the publicly traded Hilton was taking the company and saw no need to overhaul operations. For as powerful a force as New York-based Blackstone has been as an owner of real estate, hotels included, its track record as a hotel operator has been sorely limited. The deal, which has been well received by Wall Street, is slated to close in the fourth quarter.

"First and foremost, you have Blackstone, which is probably one of the brightest real estate investment groups in the world. Given that

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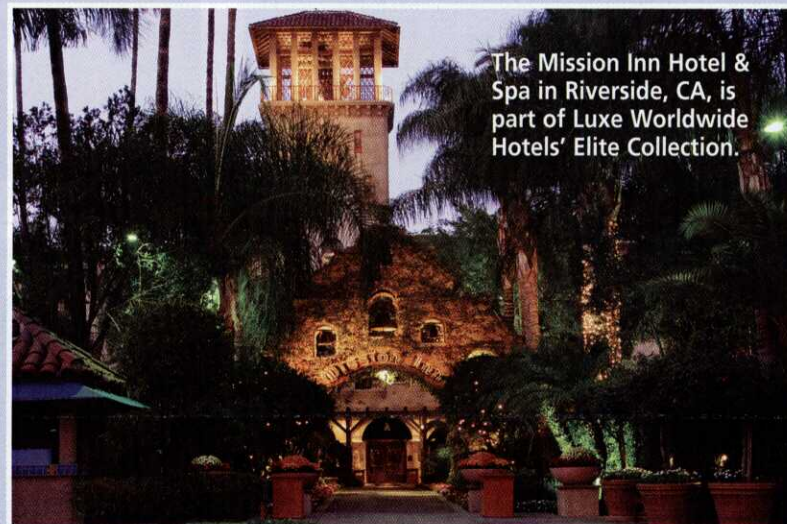
Luxe Hotels' members record 25% revenue growth

BY LAUREN BOVICH

LOS ANGELES— In the decade since its formation, Luxe Worldwide Hotels has played a major role in its members' profitability and growth. The company, which provides representation, including marketing, sales and reservation services for independently owned and operated luxury boutique hotels, saw the revenue generated by its member hotels increase more than 25% for the first half of 2007 compared with last year.

According to Efreem Harkham, Luxe's president and CEO, the firm is rapidly increasing the number of hotels it serves. This year alone, Luxe has added 24 hotels and resorts located in nine countries, including Spain, Greece, Japan, Portugal and the U.S. The company now serves more than 250 hotels worldwide.

Harkham, who owns two hotels



The Mission Inn Hotel & Spa in Riverside, CA, is part of Luxe Worldwide Hotels' Elite Collection.

himself— the Luxe Hotel Sunset Boulevard and the Luxe Hotel Rodeo drive— explained he as an owner was inspired to begin his company to better serve independent properties. "I noticed there real-

ly were not many companies that represented boutique hotels properly. They really need help to forecast demographics, not just occupancy. We take care of all sources of

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Fairmont DC combines sustainability with a good night's sleep

BY LAUREN BOVICH

WASHINGTON, DC— The Fairmont Washington, DC here is offering its guests a chance to enjoy a soothing, earth-friendly sleep experience with its new "Dream Green" promotion. The offering combines two of the most popular movements in the industry recently: a focus on improving the guests' nights' sleep as well as promoting sustainability.

The 415-room Fairmont Washington, DC, which is located in the West End of the city near the Georgetown district, was branded a Fairmont four years ago and since then has been committed to raising environmental awareness, according to general manager George Terpilowski. "A big part of our culture has been environmental stewardship and our directors of marketing and public relations responded to that with this idea by pairing green initiatives with the sleep experience," he said. "We're always trying to establish packages that are relevant and different."

The Dream Green package starts with one of the hotel's luxury guestrooms. Guests then can enjoy an organic sleep smoothie and lavender cookies that are delivered to the room. "Lavender is well-known for its soothing properties," said Terpilowski. To further aid guests, the Fairmont Washington, DC, part-

The Fairmont Washington, DC, is promoting a healthier night's sleep for guests with its Dream Green package.



nered with the company Sleep Garden, which offers products that are designed to promote a better night's sleep. As part of the Dream Green promotion, guests are provided with a complimentary CD of zMusic, *The Sound Way To Sleep* by Sleep Garden. "We made sure we tested the CD first and were very impressed," he added.

Terpilowski noted that even at luxury hotels, sleep should still be the hotel's main focus. "This promotion really hits the needs of the traveler. There's always so much focus on the incredible facilities a hotel offers, but what's

fundamental is a good night's sleep," he said. The guest make-up at the hotel also prompts the Fairmont Washington, DC to put a great deal of emphasis on sleep. "We recognize that a lot of our customers are here from the West Coast or Europe...we also see a lot of group and business travelers and all of them require a good night's rest to be functional during the day so it's very pertinent that we provide materials that can help them sleep better."

According to Terpilowski, the Dream Green package fits in well with the overall feeling of the hotel. "We have a lot of guests,

particularly on the weekends that want to just get away and are looking for a sophisticated alternative. At the hotel, we have an organic emphasis and strive to promote an overall sense of wellness," he said. As part of its goal to be a relaxing oasis in Washington, DC, the hotel offers an outdoor tranquility garden, a spa, one of the largest health clubs in the city and Juniper, a restaurant that specializes in healthy cuisine. The hotel also has a number of sustainable initiatives in place that focus on energy and water conservation as well as recycling. "We have a designated 'Green

Team' at the hotel that focuses on increasing our sustainability," he said.

Terpilowski expects the Dream Green package, which is available Thursday through Sunday each week for \$269 per night, will appeal to the hotel's guests and reported the response thus far has been positive. "It combines the luxury we are known for with a better night's sleep. We want to make our guests' stay a healthy one and the response has been building as time goes on. I suspect it's going to do well enough to make it an ongoing promotion," he said. **HB**

Revenue jump for Luxe Worldwide members nets positive word of mouth

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reservations, focus on Internet marketing and help to develop hotel's relationships with travel agents and major corporations," he said. "We also focus on revenue management which is something as an owner that definitely frustrated me in the past. We help to boost our members' bottom lines by helping them forecast demographics, manage their rates and keep them informed of their competitors' rates."

To better serve its properties, the company, based here, also opened two new offices in 2007 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates and Athens, Greece. The company now has 12 offices worldwide. Harkham noted the office in Dubai, which is Luxe's first office in the Middle East, will serve its member ho-

tels in the Middle East and South Asia, while the Athens office will focus on properties in Greece and further growth in the Balkans. The company also has enhanced its operations in London.



Efreem Harkham
Luxe Worldwide Hotels

Harkham explained the new offices will allow Luxe to have better global representation for its members. "We feel regional leadership is of the utmost importance. I have always tried to communicate the need to take care of each hotel individually and to follow up on our promises. Each of our members is unique and needs to be treated accordingly. We

try to tailor each service to meet hotel's need to ensure they will see an increase in business," he said.

Consequently, Luxe Worldwide Hotels' delivering an increase in business to it's

members has helped to attract more hotels to the company. "The increase has been phenomenal for us," said Harkham. "We have grown by word of mouth, I think that is the best way."

However, he noted Luxe Hotels is very careful to evaluate each potential member. "We look for at a hotel's location—at the location itself and also if it is near our other member hotels. We try not to create unnecessary competition for our members so we try not to double up on hotels in the same market," said Harkham. Naturally the quality of the hotels is also crucial. Harkham explained the company groups its properties into two collections: Legends and Elite. "The Legends hotels like Canyon Ranch in Tucson, AZ are properties that are historically well-known. Most hotels are in the Elite collection—including my hotels. What we look for are properties that are unique in architecture, style and location and have a high level of service," he said. "We have a team that is

focused on evaluating whether a particular hotel is ready to come on board or not."

In fact, that level of service is carefully moderated by Luxe. "A certain level of service must be adhered to in order to stay a Luxe member. We're stringent in our standards. If the level of quality drops at a particular property, we take action," said Harkham, adding it's a clause in Luxe's member agreements to discontinue a member for declining in quality. "Travelers expect a hotel to put them in a good state of mind and deliver an experience—that's where revenue and repeat business come from."

Going forward, as Luxe continues to grow, Harkham noted he has no plans himself to pursue ownership of additional hotels in order to better serve his company's members. "I've made this my focus, I don't want to be distracted by ownership. We're constantly searching for new ways to improve what we do and expand the services we offer."