

review

A PUBLICATION OF ILG

Catering to COUPLES on vacation

PROFILES

Anantara Vacation
Club Chiang Mai

The Christie Lodge

Grand Solmar at
Rancho San Lucas



Attracting
Top
Talent



Five Ways to
Retool Your
Workplace for a
New Generation
of Employees

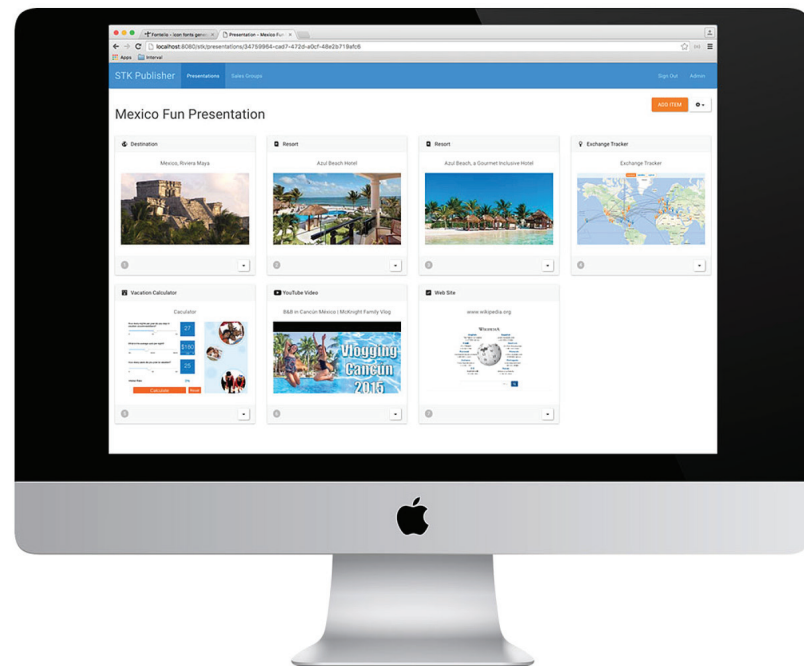
PLUS: Reaching the Millennial Market. See page 52.

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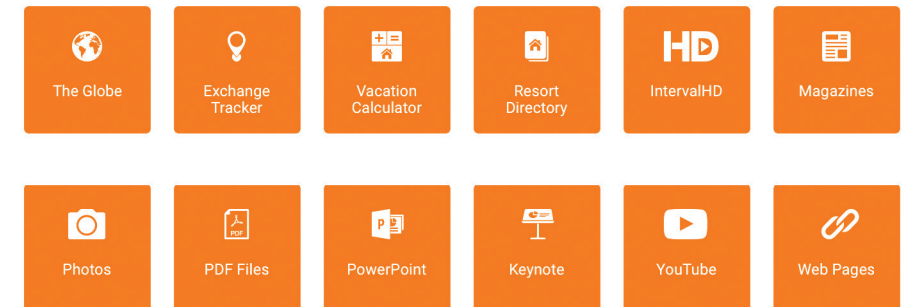
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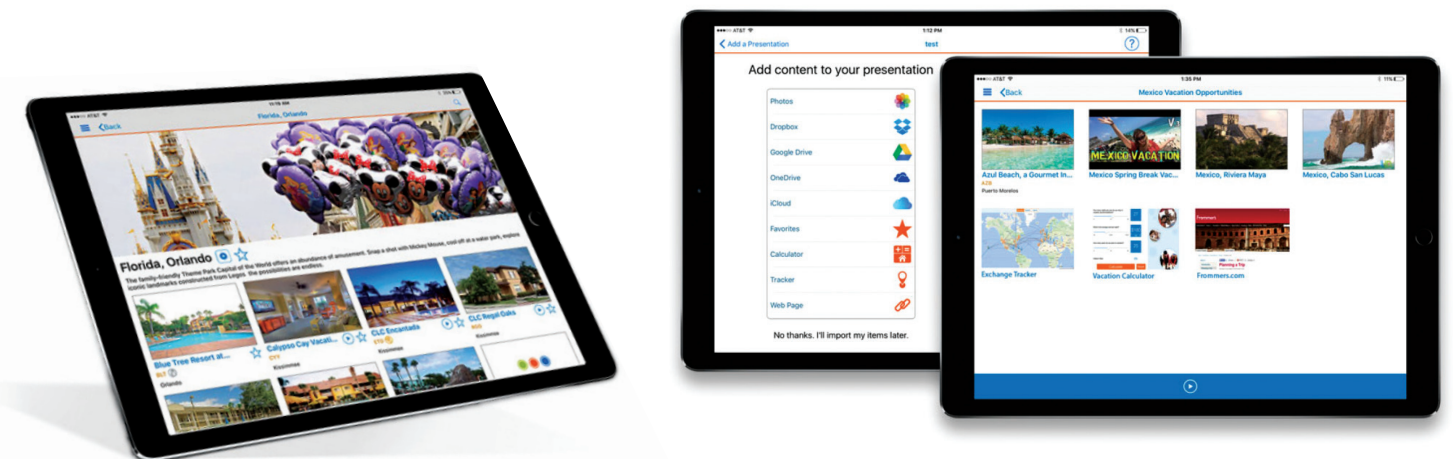
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BY
Craig M. Nash

CHAIRMAN,
PRESIDENT, AND CEO
ILG

We've Got Talent

Jeanette Marbert and I met more than 30 years ago, when, as a young lawyer, she joined Interval International® as corporate counsel. I wasn't too far out of law school myself, with just a few years of real estate and legislative experience under my belt.

I quickly recognized in Jeanette a kindred spirit: someone eager to grow and contribute in a meaningful way to the company and industry; a motivated individual with high standards and a strong work ethic. Additionally, she possessed traits that — I confess — weren't at the top of my personal list of strengths: more patience and a calming presence. It wasn't long before I realized that we made a great team.

As you know, Jeanette has played an integral role in the success of Interval International and evolution of ILG. After joining the company in 1984, she was soon promoted, and held several executive management positions of increasing scope. She has been our chief operating officer for the last 18 years.

So, I couldn't be more pleased that Jeanette has been named president and CEO of the ILG exchange and rental operating segment. Her insightful leadership, depth of knowledge of the business, and understanding of Interval's client and member needs will be invaluable assets. I know you will join me in congratulating her.

Moving on

And while we welcome Jeanette to her new role, we say goodbye to David Gilbert, who retired from his position as president of Interval International in December 2017. For nearly 30 years, David has devoted himself to the best interests of the company's resort developers and their owners. Under his leadership, many of the company's most successful products and programs were launched. While David is moving on, we look forward to working with him in a consulting role.

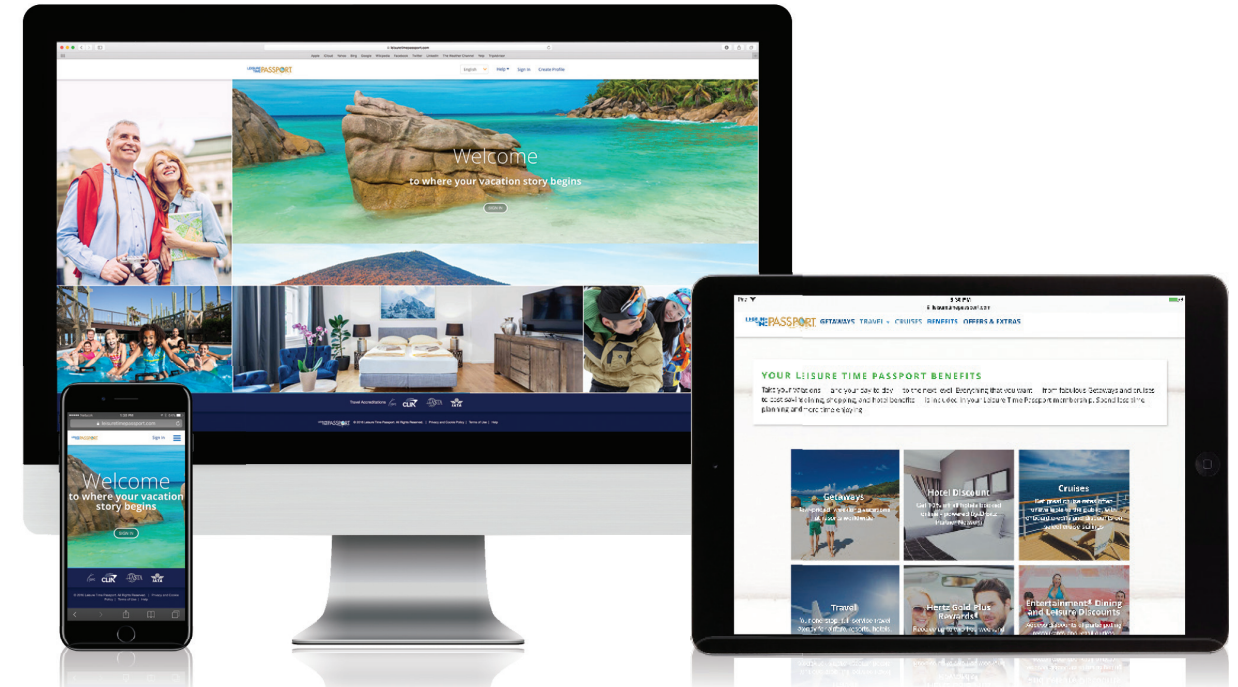
In the meantime, Interval's talented group of executives are in place to carry on David's unwavering dedication to the delivery of best-in-class products and services.

ILG's outstanding human capital isn't limited to one operating business, however. Each of ILG's companies has decades of market-leading history and strong entrepreneurial roots — from VRI to Vistana™ Signature Experiences. As one of the newest executives at ILG, Serge Rivera brings years of experience in top leadership roles with Starwood Hotels & Resorts and Starwood Vacation Ownership. I am delighted that his breadth and depth of industry expertise is now directed toward steering ILG's vacation ownership segment as president and CEO.

Long-Tenured Workforce

As I think about my good fortune to have enjoyed so many years of working with the exceptional ILG team, it strikes me that our staff tenure is quite remarkable. At a recent celebration of several milestone anniversaries, a significant number of associates with 20, 30, and even 35 years with the company were in attendance. We tallied up the total number of years at 1,235. More than a thousand years of experience gathered together!

As proud as I am of that long-term tenure, I am also pleased that our companies continue to attract new employees drawn to a forward-looking culture that embraces new business models and seeks ways to do things differently. This fresh injection of talent combined with the continuity and solidity of a seasoned team results in a formidable force, dedicated to contributing to ILG's ongoing success. [1]



LEISURE TIME PASSPORT

The perfect complement to your trial ownership or exit sales program.

The new and improved leisuretimepassport.com makes it a pleasure for members to transact, whether on a desktop computer or a mobile device. From booking a Getaway, cruise, or hotel to taking advantage of other fabulous perks such as dining and leisure discounts, it's never been easier — or more fun — to enjoy all that membership affords.

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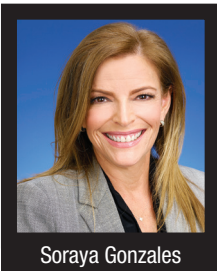


Enhance your trial ownership or exit sales program by offering year-round leisure benefits. For more information on how Leisure Time Passport can increase your sales, contact your Interval International resort sales and service representative.

Names in the News

Jane A. Garcia has been appointed director of tourism for the municipality of Benito Juárez (where Cancún is located) in Quintana Roo, Mexico. The role tasks Garcia to promote economic and tourism strategies and further relationships between the tourism sector and city council, government, and private businesses. She brings more than 23 years of sales and marketing, leadership management, and training experience to her new role. She is also head of business development for Latin America at INTUITION Brand Marketing.

Soraya Gonzales has been promoted to vice president of resort assistance and client services at Interval International. In this role, she assumes management of Interval's on-site representatives, inventory verification team, resort assistance – Latin America division, HOA board member support, and resort technology assistance. Gonzales joined Interval in 1989 as operations manager of the travel department, and has since held several leadership positions, most recently as assistant vice president of resort assistance.



Soraya Gonzales

Awards and Recognitions

ILG was named to the 2017 *Fortune* magazine list of the **100 fastest-growing public companies**, ranking 87th overall. "We are pleased to be recognized by *Fortune* as one of the fastest-growing

companies alongside some of the world's most prominent businesses," says Craig M. Nash, chairman, president, and CEO of ILG. "This acknowledgment demonstrates ILG's strong growth, resulting primarily from the successful execution of our multiyear diversification strategy."

Fortune magazine's 100 fastest-growing companies are publicly traded on a major U.S. stock exchange, and ranked by revenue and EPS growth rate, and three-year annualized total return for the period ending June 30, 2017.

The Westin Ka'anapali Ocean Resort Villas was named **Outstanding Property of the Year** at the annual Maui Hotel & Lodging Association Po'okela Awards ceremony. The Po'okela Awards honor certain individuals, as well as superior overall properties and businesses that contribute to Maui's hospitality industry through exceptional service, professionalism, and the "aloha spirit."



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EDUCATE

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REWARD

Give associates the opportunity to experience benefits firsthand.

For more information on these programs, contact your Interval International resort sales and service representative.



RESORTDEVELOPER.COM

INSIDER

Hotel Exchange

A Hit Among Interval Members for Shorter, Urban Vacations



Not even a year in the market, and hotel exchange — which launched June 2017 — is already a hit among Interval International® members. That's according to Sharon Freed, Interval's senior vice president of consumer marketing. "It's been a very positive response," she says, adding that there have been significantly more transactions than expected.

Freed attributes the success of the benefit to its flexibility and wider range of global exchange options. Through hotel exchange, Interval Gold®, Club Interval Gold®, and Interval Platinum® members are able to deposit their week or points, or apply preexisting deposits, and book a hotel in some of the world's most exciting cities via intervalworld.com.

And with direct marketing efforts underway for 2018, Freed believes even more members will take advantage of the benefit. "What our members value most about their Interval membership is flexibility," she says. "Hotel exchange offers just that. And as we continue to educate our members about it, more will certainly take advantage."

TOP
10
International
Hotel
EXCHANGE
destinations

1. Paris, France
2. London, England
3. Rome, Italy
4. Niagara Falls, Canada
5. Barcelona, Spain
6. Melbourne, Australia
7. Florence, Italy
8. Singapore
9. Tokyo, Japan
10. Sydney, Australia



NEW BUSINESS

Vacation Resorts International (VRI)

VRI has added **Mountain Retreat Resort** in Arnold, California, to its portfolio of managed properties. The resort is located in the heart of Gold Country in Calaveras County, known for its rich history and untouched landscapes. Mountain Retreat Resort has 31 cabin-inspired two-bedroom townhouses along a stretch of the Sequoia Woods Country Club. VRI is delivering a range of services, including property maintenance, financial expertise, resort management using proprietary software, and owner rental and vacation exchange services.

Interval Takes Vacation Exchange to New Heights

Today's traveler demands more flexibility and opportunities than ever before. The power of vacation exchange provides Interval International members with the ability to experience resorts and destinations previously out of reach. And when Interval Gold, Club Interval Gold, or Interval Platinum members want a different vacation experience, they have even more choices. Here's a look at the variety of vacation exchange possibilities afforded:

Full-Week Exchange Every Interval member can take advantage of the vast network of more than 3,000 resorts in over 80 nations, requesting an exchange that takes them to the tropics, to the mountains, to a theme park, or to a cosmopolitan city. And with two exchange methods — Deposit First and Request First — members have the tools to get the exchange they want *when* they want.

ShortStay Exchange® With this benefit, upgraded members can trade their week for two vacations of one to six nights each. And points-based members can make as many ShortStay Exchanges as their available points allow.

Interval Options*

Interval Experiences Upgraded Interval members can partake in a variety of unique adventures. Experiences include gourmet cooking classes and driving the most exclusive automobiles in the world during a dream-car tour.

Cruise Exchange Whether sailing through the fjords of Alaska or embarking on a Mediterranean journey, with cruise exchange, virtually every kind of itinerary is within reach. Carnival Cruise Line, Celebrity Cruises, Disney Cruise Line, Holland America Line, Norwegian Cruise Line, Royal Caribbean, and Viking Ocean Cruises are just some of the world-class providers available.

Hotel Exchange This newest addition to Interval Options® provides upgraded members with access to thousands of hotels, as well as condo-style accommodations sourced directly by Interval. New York City, Las Vegas, London, and Paris are just a sampling of locations.

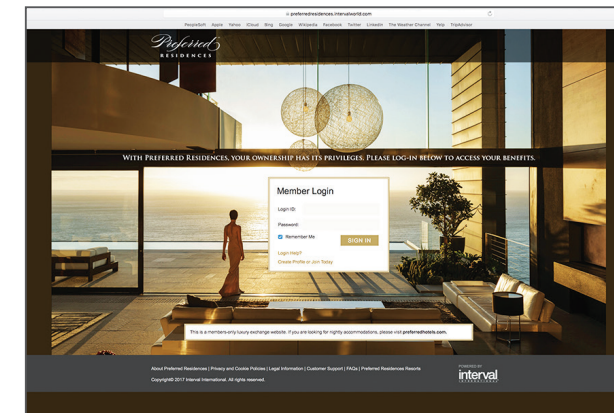
Tour Exchange For the quintessential trip of a lifetime, tour exchange delivers opportunities on a grand scale. Exotic African wildlife safaris, cultural pursuits in historic European cities, and visits to the Great Wall of China highlight some of the possibilities.



Golf Exchange Golf exchange provides the chance to play at some of the world's greatest destinations: from Scotland to Florida to Arizona. Golf packages typically include accommodations, full breakfasts, and greens fees and a golf cart for one round per day.

Spa Exchange Spa exchange opens the door to some of the world's best holistic hotspots. Services might include hot-stone therapies, deep-tissue massages, and age-defying facials.

*Available to Interval Gold, Club Interval Gold, or Interval Platinum members.



Preferred Residences Refreshes Website

The new members-only **preferredresidences.com** website makes it easier than ever for Preferred ResidencesSM owners to navigate their way to memorable vacations and valuable benefits. The website — redesigned and refreshed — serves as the digital home base for the hospitality-branded program for luxury shared ownership resorts, private residence clubs, and condominium-style hotels. Members can utilize vacation exchange opportunities, exclusive hotel benefits, and travel perks such as golf experiences at enviable properties.

The Preferred Residences brand continues to grow. Most recently, The Fives Luxury Residences in Mexico and The Point at Petite Calivigny on Grenada joined the network of luxury-tier resorts.



Interval's *Travel Planner*: The Ultimate Destination Guide

The newest edition of **Interval International's *Travel Planner*** features destination information for more than 100 vacation areas in over 80 countries, including new regions and resorts. The *Travel Planner* is produced in 14 languages and received by approximately 2 million member families worldwide.

"We continue to receive positive feedback from our members about how effective the *Travel Planner* is in providing valuable information on exciting destinations

around the globe," says Marcos Agostini, executive vice president of global sales and business development for Interval International. "The latest edition includes even more resort features, suggestions for activities and attractions, seasonal highlights, day-trips, member benefits, and more. All of this is geared to making members' exchange and Getaway vacations memorable."

The *Travel Planner* was scheduled to distribute by the end of 2017.

DEVELOPER'S PICK

The Multi-Faceted Value of Dream Vacation Week

Dream Vacation Week certificates give potential buyers the opportunity to experience vacation ownership before making a long-term commitment. They provide access to weeklong resort accommodations at an inviting price point, and can be redeemed for a stay at a selection of top destinations worldwide.

But their flexibility goes even further. Dream Vacation Week certificates are ideal as a first-day incentive, marketing premium, or thank-you gift, and can be customized to suit a specific developer's needs. For a more upscale product, Dream Vacation Week Prime delivers even more choice destinations and sought-after travel dates.

"It's hard to find another premium that elicits such excitement among owners and potential owners," says Erika Garcia, CEO of marketing for the Sunset Group. "Offering the opportunity to travel to a variety of top destinations at a great price point is a winning proposition, now and down the line. And they're very user-friendly and easy to redeem, too."



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MOBILE APPS: No Longer Just an Option for Travel Industry

BY RALPH FIOL

Within the last hour, I used Waze to navigate through traffic for my lunch meeting (reservation booked on OpenTable), wrote a stellar review on a social media site on said restaurant while I waited for my check, and purchased an iced Americano from Starbucks on my way back to the office. And I did it all from my iPhone.



Let's face it — mobile apps have become a part of daily life. This isn't some sort of new phenomenon. App usage has skyrocketed over the past nine years. According to Statista, an online statistics portal, 180 billion apps were downloaded from the Apple App Store between July 2008 (the same year the app store hit the market) and June 2017. And *The 2017 U.S. Mobile App Report* revealed that digital media usage time is driven by mobile apps, where half of digital media time is spent on smartphone applications.

While most of these users spent the majority of their time on social networking, news, retail, and multimedia apps, travel-related mobile applications are becoming increasingly popular.

Travel Planning on the Go

A survey conducted by Opera Mediaworks, now AdColony, a mobile advertising and marketing platform, found that one in three users go to specific mobile apps when researching accommodations and activities for travel. And consumers are looking to do more than just satiate their thirst for wanderlust. According to Statista, 42 percent of users downloaded or utilized a travel-related app because it was easier to make a reservation than on a mobile site. Clearly, customers are speaking and companies are listening. Which brings me to the Interval International app.

With the free app — available to iPhone, iPad, and Android-device users — travel planning is just a tap away. Interval members have been able to search for and book Getaways, create custom Getaway Alerts (instant notifications that let members know when their desired Getaway is available), search the Top Ten Deals, browse the Resort Directory, and share resort information with friends via text message, email, Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest.

Users can also locate nearby resorts using their phone's GPS, save a list of their favorite properties, view detailed descriptions and photos, watch Interval HD videos, and read the members-only *Interval World*® magazine.

Raising the Bar

Interval is in an ongoing process of updating and enhancing its digital tools, and the Interval International app is no exception. In 2018, Interval is rolling out an upgraded app with some exciting new features and functionality, plus a major facelift and refreshed look. More information to come.

Members who already have the free app on their mobile devices will experience an automatic update with these new features. And, as always, the app is available for free via the Apple App Store and Google Play.

As the stats show, mobile apps are no longer just an additional option to offer — they're an expectation for consumers everywhere. And as a product of The Quality Vacation Exchange Network®, the Interval International app is not just a mobile version of intervalworld.com — it's a native app, created specifically for the mobile-device platform.



So, the next time you pull out your smartphone to scroll through your Twitter feed, request an Uber, or even pay your credit card bill, remember you are literally one in a million who have turned to apps as the new normal. []

Ralph Fiol is the assistant vice president of digital innovation for Interval International. He leads efforts to accelerate business growth through technology, and works closely with the marketing and resort sales departments to deliver intelligence on emerging technologies.



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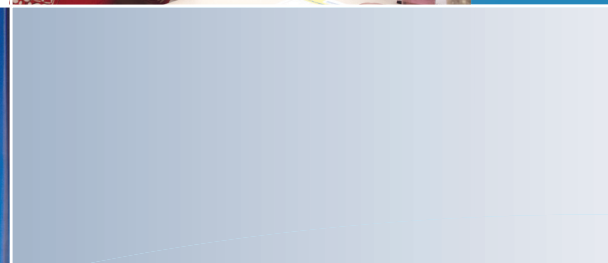


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International Shared Ownership Investment Conference Serves up a Treasure Trove of Information

TMI? Few industry insiders would agree that there can ever be *too much information* when it comes to shared ownership. “Our business is a complex one,” says Marcos Agostini, executive vice president of global sales and business development. “But in the vacation ownership world, there’s a wealth of experience and knowledge. And the International Shared Ownership Investment Conference is an opportunity to tap into those resources, which are as valuable to seasoned professionals as they are to new entrants.”

The conference, held in October at the Eden Roc Miami Beach Resort, drew more than 400 people from over 20 countries. Nearly 40 speakers and panelists shared their expertise in areas as diverse as lending, research, resort development, management, technology, and customer service.



ABOVE: View From the Top participants Tom Nelson, president and CEO, Holiday Inn Club Vacations and Orange Lake Resorts; Andy Stuart, president and CEO, Norwegian Cruise Line; David Gilbert, formerly president of Interval International; David Siegel, president and CEO, Westgate Resorts; and Mike Fliskey, CEO, Diamond Resorts International®. RIGHT: Keynote speaker Jay Baer.

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19TH ANNUAL
INTERNATIONAL
shared ownership
INVESTMENT CONFERENCE®



A Wealth of Opportunities

Another rich resource for conference registrants? Three research studies offering key metrics. The ARDA International Foundation (AIF) *State of the Vacation Timeshare Industry and Financial Performance of the Timeshare Industry*, as well as *The Shared Ownership Resort Real Estate Industry in North America*, provided by Ragatz Associates, were made available to all attendees. This research, at a combined retail value of more than US\$1,000, was complimentary.

But just as important to shared ownership professionals is the opportunity to connect with others, one-on-one. And there were plenty of occasions for networking, from coffee get-togethers to end-of-day cocktail gatherings.

“The content was meaningful and interesting, and I made some great contacts,” reports David Sudeck, senior member of JMBM Global Hospitality Group. “In fact, I had a follow-up call the day after the conference with one of the groups that I was introduced to.”

Expert Knowledge

Standout sessions included the View From the Top panel with leaders Mike Flaskey, CEO of Diamond Resorts International®; Tom Nelson, president and CEO of Holiday Inn Club Vacations and Orange Lake Resorts; David Siegel, president and CEO of Westgate Resorts; and Andy Stuart, president and CEO of Norwegian Cruise Line.

Another highlight was keynote speaker Jay Baer. The entrepreneur and author of five books captivated the audience with insights on the science of complaints and turning “haters” into loyal customers.

In another popular session, experts offered advice on how to work with social media influencers to help spread the word and generate positive exposure for companies. And presenters in almost every session remarked on the importance of developing a strong social media presence.

“Such information and insights about an ever-evolving industry could not have been shared in such an inclusive forum without the help of our sponsors,” concludes Agostini. “We appreciate the positive feedback we’ve received from attendees, and recognize the companies and supporters that made the event possible.” []

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ATTRACTING New Talent

BY JUDY KENNINGER

FIVE WAYS
TO RETOOL
YOUR
WORKPLACE

What will a visit to your offices look like in 10 years? An observer might find employees in jeans and T-shirts sitting on sofas and team-brainstorming new marketing tactics. Perhaps that guest might find few individuals on-site at all, and those who are there could be having discussions with holograms of colleagues working remotely. Or the visitor might find some staff immersed in an online training module to learn a skill seemingly unrelated to their current jobs.

Some of these scenarios are not all that futuristic. While the holograms may be a distant dream, many workplaces are already experiencing a transition from a traditional at-your-desk, business-attire, 9-to-5 environment.

So what accounts for these changes? Chalk a lot of it up to advancing technology. But some of the change may be attributed to *who's* at work. According to the Brookings Institute, millennials — those born between 1982 and 2003 — will represent more than one in three adult Americans by 2020, and make up as much as 75 percent of the U.S. workforce by 2025.

reward
empowerment balance
social responsibility
flexibility feedback
mentoring
values-driven culture

Another reason for change is that highly skilled employees are in demand — and they know it. With the U.S. unemployment rate at a 10-year low (4.2 percent in September 2017), human resources professionals are competing for top talent. “We’re not just taking a closer look at candidates; they’re also taking a closer look at us,” says Kelly Frank, chief human resources officer for ILG. “All great companies are continually positioning themselves to be the best place to work. If you don’t do that, you will find yourself at the losing end of the ability to attract the right talent.”

What do millennials, along with still important Gen Xers (born 1965 to 1981) and baby boomers (born 1946 to 1964), want from employers today? (The actual time spans for these generational designations are up for debate.) And what will it take to keep them happy once they’re hired?

To find out, we checked in with Frank and three other experts, Kimberly Tramontana, vice president of operations at Breckenridge Grand Vacations (BGV) in Breckenridge, Colorado; Monica Garcia Castillon, human resources manager at The Villa Group in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico; and Amy Gregory, assistant professor at the University of Central Florida Rosen College of Hospitality Management. Here are their top tips for employers:

1. Pay Attention

Millennials are a generation that has been well taken care of by their parents. (Do you hear the sound of a helicopter overhead?) “They don’t expect anything different at work,” Gregory says. They want more feedback, more frequent feedback, and more personalized feedback. “Not just a list of objectives, but concrete measures they can take. They’re very responsive to that.”

Documenting performance, but waiting four months until the annual review to discuss won’t just be unhelpful, it will be viewed as unfair. You can keep giving an annual review, but that’s just the start of communication — and it must go both ways. “We are reinventing

that process,” Frank says. “We’re launching a companywide associate-engagement survey that monitors the pulse of the organization; we’re looking for tools that provide continual feedback.”

“As an employer, I think it’s important that all employees, regardless of age, are able to have a voice,” Tramontana says. “We must listen to what our employees are saying, recognizing that they work more closely with customers. We provide the vision and direction, but then we ask employees how best to get there and try to give as much empowerment as possible.”

A new initiative at BGV is called Mind the Gap sessions, during which the entire executive team meets with employees to find out if there are gaps between what each group is seeing and experiencing. A recent session resulted in the retooling of compensation for housekeepers, going from a complicated incentive program to an easier-to-understand raise in base pay.

Policies that ensure that people get regular recognition and praise for a job well-done are critical to creating a more trusting and positive workplace environment for all generations.

2. Have a Plan

An important way to demonstrate that personal interest in employees is by creating targeted development plans. “They’re looking for leaders to be mentors and grow their careers,” Frank says. “We used to focus professional development more on the technology or technical side, but now we know that the ability to grow and develop the leadership potential in our best people is important.”

BGV has also implemented the Aspire program to help employees be better aligned for advancement. Geared toward employees who aren’t currently in a leadership position, it’s a self-study program that includes taking online courses, reading books, watching movies, and interacting with other members of the Aspire group. “Employees can track their progress in a log, and keep notes of what they have learned,” Tramontana says. “When it’s time to make a hiring decision,

managers can look in the Aspire file to see the progress they have made.”

The company is also considering making a formal mentoring process that’s worked well in the owner relations department an optional companywide initiative.

The Villa Group offers employees training in computer programs such as Excel, along with English lessons for their predominantly Spanish-speaking employee base. They also bring in external trainers for the kitchen staff and have an “intense” training program for wine sommeliers. “We have been investing a lot of time and money in these efforts,” Garcia says.

3. Develop the Culture

“Millennials want to enjoy their work experience,” Frank says. “Nothing makes me happier than coming in to work and seeing people who are happy, smiling, and engaged.” Toward that end, Frank advocates for a focus on the softer skills of leadership, such as emotional intelligence. “It’s not just what you accomplish, but how you accomplish it.”

That includes what employees wear when they accomplish it. “In today’s workforce, it’s something that people ask about,” Frank says. “We recently launched Dress for Your Day, an initiative that permits a more casual dress code, including the wearing of jeans.”

At The Villa Group, Garcia says the company also offers “emotional earnings.” “This is compensation to show that we care for our

DEFINING Generations

For 16 years, the generational consultants at BridgeWorks have asked baby boomers, “What is your first memory of NASA?” The landslide answer is, “landing on the moon.” They then ask, “What did that moment mean to you?” The usual answer is something like, “We could do anything. If we have the right technology and if we work hard enough, the sky is the limit.”

But when they ask Gen Xers the same question, the landslide answer is, “The Challenger explosion.” The two generations are looking at the same institution, yet see it very differently.

Each generation’s experiences affect their perceptions of the world they live in. Although you can’t typecast every millennial, Gen Xer, or baby boomer, there are important differences. Here’s a look at some identified by BridgeWorks.

	Baby Boomer	Gen Xer	Millennial
WORKPLACE MOTIVATOR	Public Recognition	Flexibility	Colleagues
TRAITS	Competitive Nonconforming Optimistic Disciplined	Resourceful Skeptical Independent Entrepreneurial	Collaborative Globally Connected Media Savvy Environmentally Conscious
VALUES	Work Ethic Professionalism Youthfulness Individualism Luxury	Transparency Independence Work-Life Balance Growth	Integrity Innovation Efficiency Speed

employees, and we do an excellent job with that,” she says. “We have many types of recognition programs and take every opportunity to let our staff know they are worth a lot to us.”

Employees who stay at least a year earn a free vacation at a hotel in Cancún, Mexico. If employees’ children earn certain grades, they receive a backpack filled with school supplies. One of the most popular benefits is a cafeteria where employees get free meals. “The food is to die for!” she says. “We show through our actions that we value our employees.”



Millennials in organizations that offer a high degree of flexibility in working arrangements report higher levels of loyalty.

4. Bend a Little — or a Lot

Today's work is much less likely to stay at work, seeping into off hours, weekends, and even vacations. In light of the growing overlap, employees now expect more flexibility in return. A four-day work week, part-time arrangements and flextime, working from home, and varying starting and ending times are examples of arrangements that are strongly linked to improved performance and employee retention.

According to a 2017 Deloitte survey, millennials in organizations that offer a high degree of flexibility in working arrangements report higher levels of loyalty. In highly flexible working environments, the difference between those who see themselves leaving within two years (35 percent) is just two points above those anticipating to stay beyond five years (33 percent) — but among those in the least-flexible organizations, there is an 18-point gap (45 percent versus 27 percent).

"Employees are asking us to be more flexible in how jobs are designed and recognizing that people only have one life," Frank says. "We have to fit everything into 24 hours, including all the things that are important to us. But balance is a very personal issue and could mean different things to different people. You have to have an individualized and personal discussion."

She cites letting an employee leave early on Wednesdays so that

parent can attend a child's baseball game as an example of helping an employee to balance work and home. "Understanding what people need and doing your best to accommodate that is one of the most effective things you can do," she says.

5. Be Responsible

According to the 2016 *Cone Communications Millennial Employee Engagement Study*, 76 percent of millennials consider a company's social and environmental commitments when deciding where to work, and 64 percent won't take a job if a potential employer doesn't have strong corporate social responsibility practices.

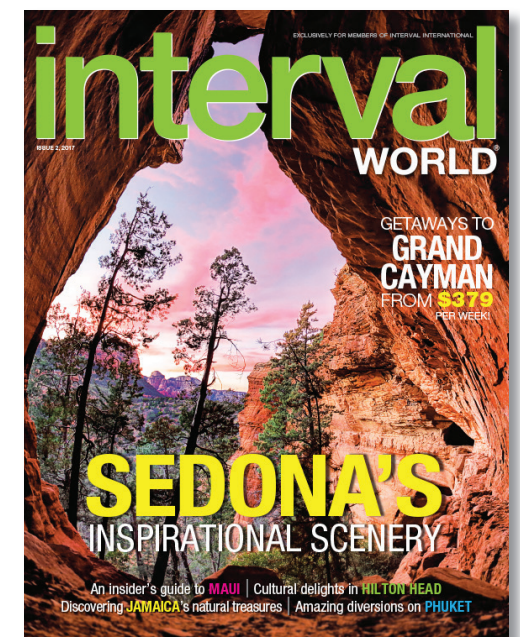
Organizations with a strong sense of purpose and a values-driven culture will likely attract more than their fair share of these employees, helping set them apart from their competitors. "They want to work in an organization that has a bigger purpose," Frank says. "They also want to know how what they are doing contributes to good, whether that is good in their community, or providing an incredible experience to guests and helping them to create memories with family and friends." []

Judy Kenninger, RRP, is principal of Kenninger Communications and has been writing about the vacation real estate industry for nearly two decades.

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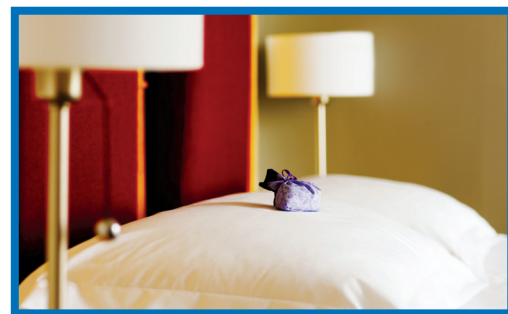
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WOOING COUPLES ON VACATION

BY JOYCE HADLEY COPELAND

Timeshare resorts reshaped the family vacation with spacious units, on-site water parks, and kids' clubs. But couples — from newlyweds to empty nesters who travel to keep the spark alive in their relationship — are just as serious about their just-the-two-of-us escapes, which often look very different from the typical family vacation.

A significant percentage of vacation owners live in two-person households. In fact, two-thirds of Interval International's U.S. members do. And savvy timeshare resorts are courting them with adults-only pools, romantic dining options, and couples' spa treatments. Weddings and vow renewals are as popular as ever, but couples are also won over by active adventures, couples-friendly events, fresh cultural experiences, and opportunities to honor their mutual commitment to wellness.

Beyond the Spa

"Certainly, our signature Spa Helani, a Heavenly Spa by Westin™ is the number-one couples' amenity," says Angela Nolan, vice president of resort operations in Hawaii for Vistana™ Signature Experiences. Couples can enhance their stay at The Westin Ka'anapali Ocean Resort Villas or The Westin Nanea Ocean Villas on Maui's stunning North Shore with a diverse menu of spa services, including a couples' package, which features Hawaiian-style massages using fluid movements and indigenous coconut oil.

“Wellness is one of the pillars of the Westin brand, so that is very important in terms of what we focus on,” Nolan says, whether it be private in-villa massages or couples-friendly yoga classes. (A Westin study found that 80 percent of respondents reported being more active and health-conscious during their honeymoon than at home.) Two 24-hour WestinWORKOUT® Fitness Studios serving both resorts are often packed early in the morning with couples starting their day off with a good workout.

Adventure as an Amenity

According to a survey conducted by the U.S. Travel Association, 76 percent of non-married couples say that being adventurous is an important reason to travel together. Clearly, couples want to bond over an adventure and seek out destinations, such as Hawaii, that offer a wide range of activities and once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Nearly half of all baby boomers that responded to a recent AARP survey keep a bucket list, and Hawaii is the top bucket-list travel destination among boomers planning a domestic vacation.

“Maui has all different kinds of activities,” Nolan says. “Regardless of your age, you can go snorkeling or hike into the rain forest at Hana. We have Haleakala, a dormant volcano, which is something really cool to be able to experience at sunrise or sunset. It’s like no other place on Earth!” Resorts are partnering with trusted vendors to offer couples access to a variety of activities and local excursions — from ATV safari tours to zip lining — that can be arranged by the concierge.

Diving Into Culture

“Over the years, as travel has changed, couples aren’t coming to do touristy things, but really to envelop themselves in the culture,” Nolan says. “They want to meet the local people. They want to find the

79% of couples believe that traveling together has a positive impact on their relationship*

mom-and-pop restaurants off the beaten path.”

Couples staying at Hacienda Encantada Resort & Spa, tucked into a rugged cliff with mesmerizing views of the Sea of Cortez near Cabo San Lucas, Mexico, are invited to combine authentic culture and wellness by participating in a traditional purifying ceremony called *temazcal*. Named for the goddess Temazcaltoci, who was believed to heal physical, spiritual, mental, and moral ailments, the ritual takes place inside a small, round sweat lodge. A shaman splashes hot stones with herb-infused water to release steam meant to cleanse the body and spirit. Practiced for centuries in Mexican and Central American cultures, temazcal can be an emotionally bonding experience for a couple.

Like Hawaii, Los Cabos is the perfect setting for the romance and adventure that couples seek. “We’re located within the Tourist Corridor, closer to Cabo San Lucas, where the action takes place,” says Gabriel Ibarra Macias, sales and marketing director for Mexico Grand Hotels. “We have the seclusion, but also the proximity to downtown.” The hacienda-inspired grounds, private beach, luxe villas, and decadent spa treatments create a sanctuary for couples who want to cocoon.

For foodies, the resort’s all-inclusive Dine Out Privilege Plan includes a-la-carte dining at its six on-site restaurants and bars, as well as complimentary shuttle service to six restaurants it operates in the buzzy Marina Golden Zone at the Cabo San Lucas Marina. “For a couple, it’s just perfect not only to be on property, but also to have a chance to take the shuttle downtown, take a walk down there, have a



63% believe that travel helps couples stay together longer*

romantic dinner, and then come back to the property where the bar is open until 11 p.m.,” says Ibarra.

Adventure-seekers can tap the concierge to arrange a wide variety of high-adrenaline activities such as jet skiing, parasailing, and off-road excursions to explore desert trails and secluded beaches in a dune buggy.

Urban Odysseys

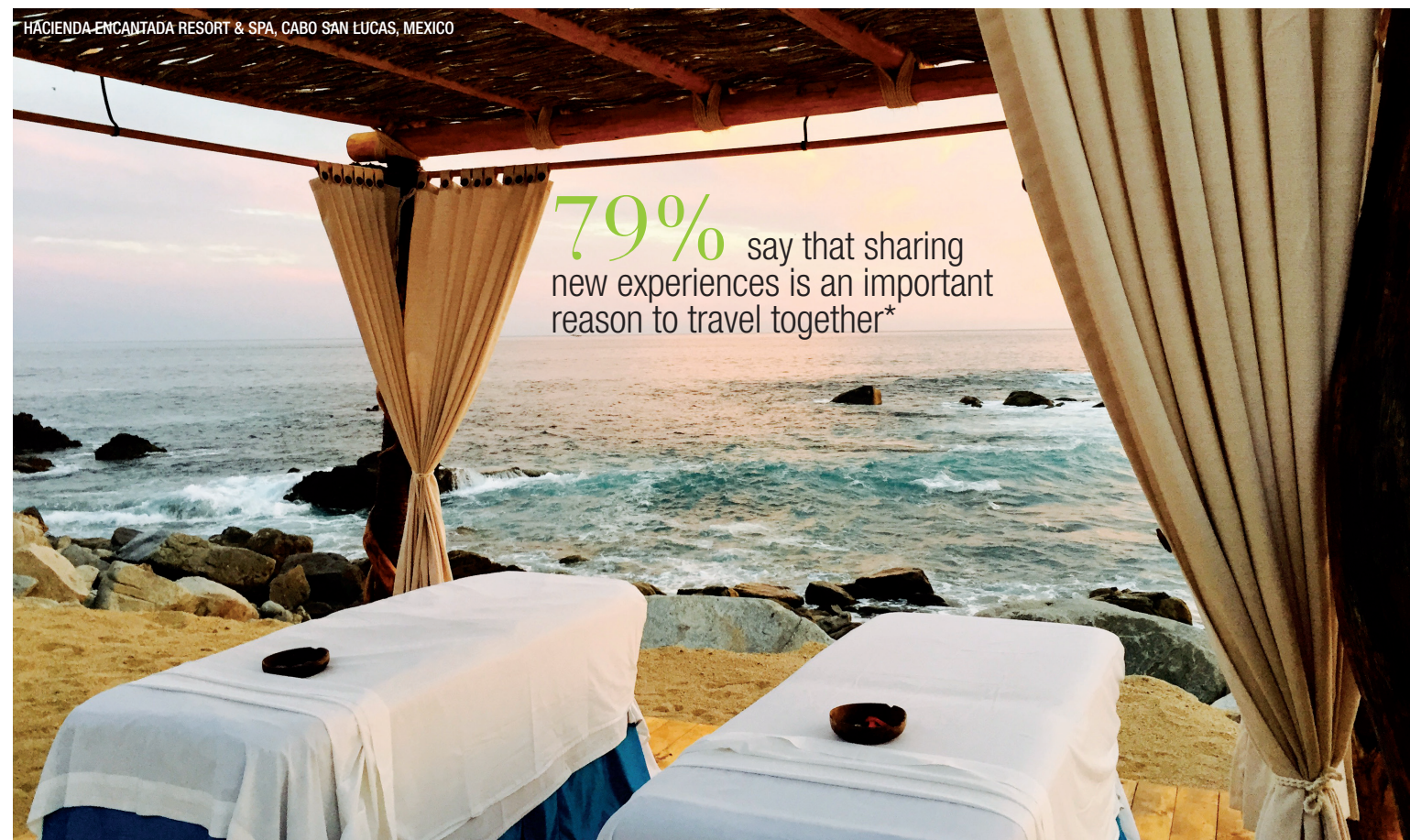
The best adventures are not always at the beach. Many couples are drawn to the energy and honeypot of cuisine and culture offered by iconic U.S. cities and international destinations such as Paris, Rome, Sydney, and Tokyo.

Marriott Vacation Club is among a cadre of timeshare companies with properties in the heart of the action. With the best addresses in five U.S. cities — Boston, New York City, Washington, D.C., Miami Beach, and San Diego — Marriott Vacation Club PulseSM hotels cater to travelers who want to go beyond standard sightseeing and feel like an *insider* rather than a tourist. Concierges know the city’s best-kept secrets and can point couples to the best shopping and restaurants locals favor.

Couples who fall in love with urban escapes can travel even farther afield through Interval International’s hotel exchange program. Interval Gold®, Club Interval Gold®, and Interval Platinum® members can exchange their week or points toward a hotel or condominium-style resort stay in some of the world’s most exciting cities.

Double the Fun

With the kids on their own and more disposable income, boomers account for just over half of domestic trips, according to a study conducted by AARP, and many are pairing up with other couples. Roomier timeshare villas with two or more bedrooms make it practical and enjoyable for couples to travel together, balancing privacy with all the upscale comforts of home.



“Throughout the year, we do see a lot of couples traveling together,” Ibarra says. Groups checking in to superior suites with up to four bedrooms or three-bedroom residences take advantage of the resort’s pre-stock service to fill the refrigerator, even if they plan to dine out most of the week, and many splurge on a private chef during their stay.

With good friends in tow, couples enjoy the best of both worlds — quality time alone and fun as a foursome, golfing, hiking, or touring local attractions together.

Adults-only resorts, amenities, and activities are also fertile ground for finding new friends in like-minded couples. “I’ve been at this resort [The Westin Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas] for seven years and we’ve seen a lot of friendships form here,” Nolan

72% say traveling together inspires romance*



says. Couples who meet at the adults-only pool or at events go on to plan vacations around each other’s time off, she adds. “What we find is that couples meet other couples, and then choose to barbecue or meet up for dinner the following evening. You really create a bond at some of these activities.”

Fire Up the Fun at The Westin Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas is a good example. Hosted by Jesse Pita, chef de cuisine of Pūlehu, an Italian Grill, and restaurant manager and wine expert Jim Hansen, the event is a step-by-step preparation of two dishes that are paired with wine. “People are very aware of what they’re eating and how it’s being prepared, and couples now like to cook together as kind of a bonding activity,” Nolan says. “Fire Up the Fun is a really great opportunity for couples to experience that. They get samples, recipe cards, and get to cook things up. It’s really a great, engaging activity.”

James Cooper, managing director of Hyatt Residence Club Carmel, Highlands Inn on the coast of Northern California, also observes a tendency for couples to connect on property. “We have an outdoor fire pit and people like to sit around the fire ring at night. Every night, it’s a happening place. You can buy s’mores kits at the gift shop, and people are out cooking s’mores and enjoying the company. The hotel is warm, intimate, and relaxing, the perfect oasis for folks hoping to get away from the hustle and bustle of their daily lives.”

Couples who strike up a friendship may move on to sample award-winning wines together at California Market at Pacific’s Edge, which



has made the property a landmark for a century, or enjoy a round of golf at nearby Pebble Beach Golf Links or Spyglass Hill Golf Course.

Milestone Magic

“We’ve seen couples traveling together and then they get engaged while they’re here, while they’re with friends,” Nolan says. An engagement (at any age) is often just the start of a string of couples-only vacations, often launching with a wedding. Resorts that offer beautiful venues as well as a range of packages are a big hit with couples-to-be.

“We do quite a wedding business here,” Cooper says. “We have a beautiful wedding deck. It’s the only place you can get married with a backdrop of the ocean anywhere nearby. On the weekends, sometimes we’ll do two or three weddings in a day. We’re trying to find ways to encourage folks to plan their nuptials midweek as well. We offer some more favorably priced packages.”

The largest uptick in the romance-travel sector is the planned elopement. Hyatt Residence Club Carmel, Highlands Inn’s elopement package includes an intimate ceremony in a stunning setting followed by a celebratory dinner, giving engaged couples an affordable option to a pull-out-all-the-stops wedding.

Traditional weddings are giving way to more personalized events. “One of the things that our wedding manager is doing well is accommodating the different ways people are celebrating their weddings,” Nolan says. “Nowadays, we see people doing sunrise weddings with breakfast to follow, rather than your traditional sit-down dinner with the Champagne toasts and all the speeches. We’re modifying some of our wedding packages to accommodate that.”

Happily Ever After

And because 63 percent of couples believe that travel helps them stay together longer, it should not be a surprise that anniversary and vow-renewal celebrations are also on the rise.

“People really like to celebrate those milestones in a destination like Hawaii,” says Nolan, who points to the simple ceremony that couples can opt for at The Westin Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas’ Kai Lani Lawn, “feet away from the ocean and sand, with sweeping views of the Pailolo Channel and the islands of Molokai and Lanai.”

There’s no doubt that vacationing together helps couples strengthen their relationship. Resorts that find new ways to help them bond and celebrate milestones together year after year also reap the rewards of a long-term relationship with a major part of the market. []

Joyce Hadley Copeland, based in Tucson, Arizona, contributes regularly to travel and hospitality publications and websites.

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*Source: U.S. Travel Association

A Commitment to Wow Owners

BY J.B. BISSELL

The Christie Lodge in Avon, Colorado, was built in 1980, and offered its first vacation ownership product two years later. At the time, the resort was one of the largest timeshare properties in North America, with 280 rooms and almost 15,000 deeded intervals. (It remains one of the largest resorts in the Vail Valley.)



That's 35 years of timesharing, well beyond the threshold for legacy status, which is defined by the American Resort Development Association (ARDA) as single-site, HOA-controlled resorts erected prior to 1995. In simple terms, in an industry that challenges independent operators to achieve prolonged success, three-and-a-half decades is stunning.

What makes The Christie Lodge even more impressive is that it has lasted so long in a region that's seen so much high-end growth. Back in early 1980, Vail had just recently become a renowned ski destination, nearby Beaver Creek was getting ready to open, and the entire area was on the verge of breaking through as a summertime playground for travelers.

Today, world-class restaurants, shopping, and weather draw visitors year-round, while golf, fishing, and hiking highlight the warmest months. As for skiing and snowboarding, Vail graduated long ago from being merely renowned. It's now a titan, arguably one of the most popular snow destinations on Earth, perfectly complemented by sister mountain Beaver Creek and its unique vibe, which manages to be both ritzy and welcoming at the same time.

Because of all this, it should be no surprise that vacation ownership is very popular here. Or that during the same 35-year stretch, new developments backed by big brands continuously raised the bar in terms of comfort and luxury.

What may be somewhat of a surprise, though, through all that stately expansion, The Christie Lodge, an admittedly low-key property situated between two international ski destinations — about 10 miles (16 kilometers) from Vail and just less than 3 miles (5 kilometers) from the base of Beaver Creek — has remained a mainstay of the area's timeshare market.

Lisa Siegert-Free, managing director and general manager at The Christie Lodge, is very proud of her resort's position in the community — and the industry — and, quite simply, is undaunted by all the vacation ownership properties that have risen and expanded throughout the region over the years. "We have always had the attitude that we are fiercely independent," she says.

Comment Cards

That fierce independence is based on many factors, of course, but the foundation is refreshingly straightforward: "We take our owners' and guests' comments very seriously, and do our best to include their suggestions in the renovations of the Lodge," says Siegert-Free.

To stay as up-to-date as possible, The Christie Lodge operates on a seven-year renovation cycle — and Siegert-Free might be understating just how much effort goes into compiling and incorporating those comments.

For the latest round of refurbishments, coined Project WOW, the management team studied 10 years worth of suggestion-box notes from overnight visitors, pored over various internet accommodations-rating sites, and discussed any property-related concerns brought up by housekeeping and maintenance staffs.

After cross-referencing the varied sources of information, the team created a list of the 20 most important issues, and then engineers and designers set out to address them. "We upgraded the kitchenettes to be more efficient," explains Siegert-Free. "The units have beautiful new cabinets, an upgraded refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave, and a newly added single stovetop burner."

"The bathrooms are also newly remodeled, with walk-in showers and new toilets, tile, and vanities. We upgraded all trim and doors, added furnishings, and the floors have recently been changed to wood, with decorative rugs."

Other significant renovations include removing the popcorn ceilings, installing ceiling fans, replacing all the existing lighting with LED bulbs, rebuilding the fireplace mantles, and relocating the dishwashers.

"It's all part of our goal to be constantly upgrading the Lodge's appearance and installing new technology," Siegert-Free says.

And it's a major undertaking. The Christie Lodge has 253 one-bedroom suites and 27 three-bedroom units that average approximately 400 square feet (37 square meters) and 800 square feet (74 square meters), respectively.

Needless to say, Project WOW is not a weekend endeavor. In fact, virtually none of the work is done on the weekends.

Self-Control

The goal from the very beginning for Project WOW was not to rush to a hasty completion, but, instead, to avoid disrupting regular services as much as possible — and to keep the costs manageable. Ultimately, those two objectives are intertwined.

The construction schedule is Monday through Friday during normal business hours.

Owners and guests are assigned rooms in quiet sections of the building, away from where the work is happening.

This unique and unobtrusive regimen was feasible only because of an idea Rick Dameron, executive director of operations, presented as a way to help ensure that the cost of the project could be covered from the capital reserve fund as opposed to seeking outside financing.

Rather than commission an independent construction company, local tradesmen were hired on a long-term basis to supplement the resort's existing two-man-project crew. This essentially established an in-house remodeling team, which allows management to have full control over when and where the work is done — not to mention saving money by negotiating directly with suppliers and striking deals for bulk delivery of materials.

Local Value

Value, whether in the form of two-by-fours bought in bulk or the all-around vacation experience, is a hallmark of The Christie Lodge. “It’s reflected in low maintenance fees and the affordable cost of nightly rentals,” says Siegert-Free. “It’s one of the greatest factors that allows us to create a very unique niche in this area. That, and the personalized customer service provided by our staff.”

From an outsider’s perspective, that niche might best be described as making out-of-towners feel like locals. The Christie Lodge is not a ski-in/ski-out property. And that’s just fine. The Vail Valley isn’t the kind of place where year-round residents own the ski-in/ski-out condos.

“That’s absolutely part of our appeal,” explains Siegert-Free. “In addition to being a better value, our guests can walk to a major grocery store, a variety of shops, and restaurants and bars where locals actually hang out. And there’s a free bus that stops right in front of our building. Access to the nearest ski lift is just a five-minute bus ride away.”

Still, no vacation retreat is complete without a few indulgences. “Guests do love our year-round indoor and outdoor pools and hot tubs, as well as the game room, fitness center, and various in-house activities,” Siegert-Free says. “We are unique in having two restaurants on property: a Subway shop and Pho 20, a sit-down restaurant with Vietnamese dishes and a bar. In addition, we have an on-site sporting retail shop, Charter Sports, that rents skis and snowboard equipment in the winter, as well as bikes in the summer.

“And speaking of locals’ favorites,” she adds, “right across the street is a place called Blue Plate. Often, they’ll cook a whole lamb or pig on a spit, and offer very affordable sandwich specials for patrons. Our guests love it.”

Exciting Times

Guests also are loving the recent introduction of Interval International’s Club Interval Gold® as a complement to vacation ownership. Traditionally, The Christie Lodge has offered a deeded product, with prices ranging from US\$5,990 for a one-bedroom off-season unit to US\$38,990 for a three-bedroom suite during a Christmas or New Year’s week. Club Interval Gold, though, allows owners to trade their week in points, which



offers myriad opportunities to exchange for different lengths of stays, seasons, and unit sizes.

“We’ve recently engaged with Trucation, an outside sales company, and Club Interval Gold has been well-received,” Siegert-Free says. “We just came back from our annual owners’ meeting. After having the opportunity to speak with several owners, it’s clear that they’re excited about the flexibility.”

It’s also been made perfectly clear that owners at The Christie Lodge are excited about their home resort, and visitors are excited about the prospect of buying in. “Because of the value, we continue to see many return guests, and that’s helped us have another successful timeshare sales program over the past year,” Siegert-Free says.

When asked how much impact Project WOW might have had on recent sales, Siegert-Free reverts to one of The Christie Lodge’s institutional foundations: “Our comment-card scores are very good,” she says. “And our employees continue to wow guests with their customer service.” After 35 years, it’s hard to argue with that formula. []



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FAST FACTS



PRIVACY and EXCLUSIVITY in Mexico's Baja California

BY KATHY HERNANDEZ

Along the picturesque Pacific Coast of Mexico in iconic Baja California Sur, about 20 minutes from downtown Cabo San Lucas and 34 miles (55 kilometers) from Los Cabos International Airport, sits the Solmar Group's new 834-acre (337.5 hectares) master-planned community, with two vacation ownership offerings in addition to the residential component. Rancho San Lucas, with a stretch of unspoiled beach, is both private and exclusive, and immersed in natural topography.



Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas, the vacation ownership component of the community, has a lot to offer to existing and new owners and guests who want to experience a totally different contemporary, lavish retreat. Once completed, it will have access to the community's host of amenities, including an 18-hole Greg Norman golf course and clubhouse, a state-of-the-art tennis facility and sports complex, five restaurants, a world-class spa, and a Mexican-style village with shopping, dining, and entertainment. A 15-acre (6 hectares) lake will have a family picnic area, kayaking and other water activities, and miles of jogging and mountain bike trails.

Nearby is the famous Arch at Land's End, with a resident sea lion colony, where the Pacific Ocean and Sea of Cortez meet. A multitude of experiences and adventures await, including off-road vehicle trails, zip lining, fishing, diving, snorkeling, boating, sunset cruises, dolphin- and whale-watching excursions, horseback riding, world-class golf, even riding a camel in the desert, and much more.

Vacation Ownership Rollout

Phase one of Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas, one of two vacation ownership components, was on schedule to open December 2017 with 14 studios and 38 one-bedrooms, along with two infinity-edge swimming pools, a swim-up bar, a saltwater lagoon, a mini water park, and a kids' pool. A two-story fine-dining restaurant, a deli cafe, a gift shop and mini market, a fitness center, a beauty salon, and a kids' club also opened at this time. Other resort amenities available to owners and

guests include an event lawn, spa cabanas, a laundromat, car rental, and full concierge service.

The total number of units upon completion will include 119 studios and 299 one-bedrooms, featuring Solmar's signature range of deluxe amenities, with full kitchens and marble counters, private terraces, and separate spacious living areas.

In addition to Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas, the vacation ownership offerings at the resort also feature Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas Resort Golf & Spa, an upscale Preferred ResidencesSM resort with 71 two-bedrooms, 17 of which were part of the phase-one opening.

The luxury, private resort community of Rancho San Lucas also encompasses full ownership, fully deeded real estate at Norman Estates at Rancho San Lucas, with estate homes and condominiums, and The Villas at Rancho San Lucas. These real estate subdivisions offer ocean- and golf-view single-family homes, as well as beachfront estate residences and condominiums.

Upgraded Lifestyle Changes

"We have found that our solid client base, which has invested in our vacation ownership products for the last three decades, has been upgrading their accommodations on a regular basis for many years," explains Ricardo Orozco, vice president of operations for Solmar Hotels & Resorts.

"Many of our clients continue to look for ways to spend more time in Los Cabos," Orozco continues. "As they mature, we see that they are



making upgraded lifestyle changes and are ready to make a move to a place where they can enjoy the results of their accomplishments in life.”

According to Orozco, the company’s continually growing client base includes residents of California, Oregon, Washington, Texas, New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Illinois in the U.S.; British Columbia in Canada; as well as other locations and countries. “To us, this signifies a continuation of the Solmar legacy as a key player in Los Cabos since the late 1960s, with three decades of vacation ownership offerings,” he adds.

The Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas vacation ownership product is a 50-plus-year membership plan, with floating units and floating season. Approximately 50 percent of all the company’s vacation ownership sales come from the existing member base through various in-house programs; other leads are generated from a series of external prospecting initiatives.

Sales strategies involve use of the Interval Sales Tool Kit app, which includes a host of features such as the Interval Exchange Tracker, the Vacation Calculator, and the Resort Directory. “They are very important tools for our sales teams and in our sales process, along with destination videos and membership overviews from Interval HD,” Orozco says.

“We are excited that the Solmar Group continues to provide outstanding vacation products and experiences, and especially now with



Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas,” says Marcos Agostini, Interval’s executive vice president of global sales and business development. “With the extraordinary growth that Los Cabos is experiencing, this makes for a perfect affiliate for us.”

Connected to Nature

Rancho San Lucas will take members and guests away from the city lights of Cabo San Lucas and into the star-filled night skies of Baja. The exclusive resort community has a direct-access highway so guests don’t have to meander through neighborhoods or other roadways to get there. Dramatic desert landscapes and iconic ocean views in a secluded, luxury hideaway make this experience a private paradise, rather than just a vacation.

“We have redrafted access roads to take advantage of the local topography and took great measures to guarantee that the original spirit and feel of Baja is maintained by rescuing and relocating local flora and fauna,” says Orozco. “It’s simply above ordinary.”

Luxury Redefined

With the short-term and long-term plans for Rancho San Lucas, the Solmar Group continues its tradition as a premier resort developer in Los Cabos, offering extraordinary vacation experiences while maintaining the commercial success of its brand. “Our pioneering founder saw the potential that Los Cabos had before anyone believed that this piece of desert surrounded by two oceans would become the most exclusive tourist destination in Mexico,” Orozco notes.

“We have families who have been part of our team of collaborators for two generations, which is something that can only be achieved through true commitment. Our goal is for our new members and guests to feel a part of the Solmar family. We want to be a special place where everyone looks forward to returning. We call it luxury redefined.” [J]

Kathy Hernandez is president of Orlando, Florida-based KHA PR, a public relations and marketing communications firm. She has more than 30 years of experience in the tourism and timeshare industries.



Grand Solmar at Rancho San Lucas

AN INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL ELITE RESORTSM



FAST FACTS



Developer: Solmar Group
Headquarters: Cabo San Lucas, Baja California Sur, Mexico
Product: Right-to-use, floating units, floating season
Units: 119 studios and 299 one-bedrooms
Website: grandsolmarranchosanlucas.com; ranchosanlucas.com

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An Alternative to Beach or Bangkok IN THAILAND

Some 426 miles (686 kilometers) north of Bangkok, however, set deep in the mountainous interior, the ancient Lanna Kingdom of Chiang Mai has quietly built a reputation as an idyllic vacation spot for travelers seeking a peaceful reprieve from the commotion of Thailand's most celebrated locales.

"While Chiang Mai doesn't have the sea views offered at beach resorts, it does bring guests much closer to the nature and culture of Thailand," says Maurizio Bisicky, chief operating officer at Anantara Vacation Club Chiang Mai. "Our property affords unparalleled access to Thailand's charming northern capital. Visitors can trek through the jungles, visit glistening golden temples perched on mountaintops, and experience the culture and beauty of the country they are visiting."

Conveniently, Anantara Vacation Club Chiang Mai is centrally located in the lively municipality of Chiang Mai. "Its location gives guests the best of two worlds," Bisicky continues. "It allows for them to easily access the excitement and conveniences of the city, as well as the entire area's most popular tourist destinations."

And like the Chiang Mai region itself, the resort serves as a sanctuary of tranquility. "Upon entering the property, the soothing ambiance takes guests away from the noise of the downtown area, offering the perfect urban escape in which to unwind and relax," adds Bisicky.

Spacious Suites and Subtle Design

The effects of the soothing environment are immediate. The design team's goal was to blend the provincial charm of Chiang Mai with contemporary features and comfortable amenities — and that begins with the grounds and public areas.

"Each space has been carefully crafted to create a refined setting for our guests," Bisicky says. "The landscape was designed to enhance the overall architecture. It's simple and elegant, and makes use of native plants to provide natural privacy and augment the surroundings. The interiors reflect a modern Thai look with traditional influences, including carved wooden ornaments, classic metal work, and silk."

While subtle design elements complement the resort's all-around welcoming atmosphere, spacious accommodations ensure that guests are comfortable throughout their stay.

Shared ownership units at Anantara Vacation Club Chiang Mai are available in three configurations: One-bedroom suites span 710 square feet (66 square meters), two-bedrooms are 936 square feet (87 square meters), and the vast three-bedroom quarters are spread out over 1,614 square feet (150 square meters).

"All of the suites are furnished with the same modern amenities you would have in the comfort of your own home," says Bisicky. "From full-size refrigerators, microwaves, and stovetop cookers to TVs, a washer and dryer, and much more. The rooms also feature luxurious rain showers and full-size bathtubs."

Special Places

Unlike being at home, however, Anantara Vacation Club Chiang Mai offers an array of amenities that are meant to both pamper and enlighten owners and guests. The most striking of which is the rooftop infinity pool.

The beach or the big city. For decades, timesharing in Thailand has been focused on those extreme ends of the destination spectrum. Indeed, Phuket and Bangkok are internationally renowned, so it's no wonder vacationers have traditionally flocked to either the country's golden seashore or the heart of its bustling urban capital.

BY J.B. BISSELL





“It stretches 111 feet [34 meters] and looks out from the hotel down to the Ping River — and boasts stunning views of the nearby mountains and the city of Chiang Mai,” Bisicky says. “There’s no doubt that it’s the standout feature of the resort. There’s a pool bar, and the wooden deck provides ample opportunity for leisure and small functions. It’s really an oasis where guests can unwind and relax.”

Visitors can also access dining facilities equally impressive as the views from the infinity pool. Known simply as The Restaurant, the resort’s standard eatery is a longtime guest favorite, according to Bisicky. “The menu is defined by a delectable selection of Indian and Peruvian dishes prepared under the craftsmanship of Executive Chef Patricio.”

In fact, The Restaurant remains the only place in all of Chiang Mai where travelers can partake of Peruvian fare. And yet, it’s not even the property’s most unique dining experience. That distinction goes to The Service 1921 Restaurant & Bar.

One of the original buildings on the property, it opened in 1921 and served as the British Consulate of Chiang Mai. As the resort’s website explains, “The Service 1921 reimagines the colonial era in an eccentric and fictitious reinvention of the British government’s secret intelligence service.”

To properly set that particular stage, there’s a peephole in the door at the main entrance and even a private dining area that is accessed via a secret bookshelf entryway in the library. Beyond the fun — if unconventional — construction elements, the menu offers a delicious fusion of contemporary Chinese Szechuan, Thai, and Vietnamese dishes.

Guest favorites include the Hue shrimp with vegetable pancakes and pork dumplings, and — of course — the signature afternoon tea event, complemented by gourmet pies, quiches, and scones. Despite the vast array of culinary delights, Bisicky concedes, “People are particularly fond of the mystery and intrigue that comes with eating at The Service 1921.”

Class Is in Session

Visitors have also become fond of Spice Spoons, the resort’s on-site cooking class. And this is no simple lecture series. Participants discuss menu options with their personal chef and travel to local markets to shop for the freshest ingredients before settling in the kitchen to learn about the health and cultural impacts of Thai cuisine. Of course, they also learn the trade secrets of constructing some of Thailand’s most popular dishes, such as coconut chicken soup followed by crispy fish with spicy mango salad.

The culmination of each session is sitting down to enjoy the home-made meal for lunch. The true reward, though, as Bisicky says, “is the opportunity to bring your newfound knowledge, skills, and recipes back home to impress friends and family.”

Flexible Ownership

Anantara Vacation Club has four tiers of ownership: Jade, Ruby, Diamond, and Platinum. “It’s a unique, flexible vacation ownership program based on points and multiple destinations,” explains Bisicky. Consumers are encouraged to purchase the level of ownership that corresponds with the number of points they’ll need to cover the size of accommodations and frequency of travel they typically desire.

“After that, based on their points, owners may choose from a number of destinations, the length of their stay (even just one day), season, room type, and number of vacations they wish to take each year,” Bisicky says. “Sometimes they can even use their points to pay for food and drinks. For the upper ownership tiers, we also offer Royal Programmes that feature exclusive experiences and vacation packages.”

With the spacious floor plans and distinct amenities on offer at Chiang Mai, it’s no wonder the location has enjoyed sustained success. “We do have an active and effective preview center here,” says Bisicky. “But we utilize a variety of sales and marketing strategies to perpetuate an effective business model.”

For example, the company’s main marketing focus is Asian travelers, so “we rely on an extensive and ever-growing network of marketing locations all over Thailand,” Bisicky explains. “Additionally, we have well-established marketing partnerships with leading financial institutions from mainland China, Thailand, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and the Philippines that help us reach consumers who wish to attend preview presentations.”

Good Partners

Helpful collaborations are a common theme for Bisicky. “As with any global business, strategic partnerships are vital to ensure our owners receive the best service and the most comprehensive regional coverage for their accommodation needs,” he says. “Interval International provides outstanding resort options in regions where we do not yet have a footprint — as well as all-around accommodation flexibility and variety. In a changing marketplace, where choice and flexibility are key business drivers, this is a vital component of our product offering.”

In a sense, the Chiang Mai region itself — not the beach, not a massive urban center such as Bangkok — is a changing marketplace in Thailand. So even in the midst of all the marketing efforts and strategic partnerships, Bisicky is diligent to focus on what’s most important. “For now,” he says, “our main focus is to continue to welcome guests to our property and strive to immerse them in the various experiences of the area.” [1]

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For more information, contact Nicole Meck at 949-470-8324 or nicole.meck@intervalintl.com, or go to resortdeveloper.com.

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Anantara Vacation Club Chiang Mai

AN INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL PREMIER RESORT®



FAST FACTS



Developer: Minor Hotel Group
Headquarters: Chiang Mai, Thailand
Product: Points program: Jade, Ruby, Diamond, and Platinum
Website: anantaravacationclub.com; chiang-mai.anantara.com

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Keeping Resorts Competitive in the Digital Age

DG Film Company, a full-service production company with more than 17 years of experience — including the creation of customized resort presentations worldwide — has joined the Interval Affiliate Advantages program.

- DG Film Company offers professional film presentations that meet clients' marketing needs while remaining within budget.
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For a two- to three-minute showcase video, participating resorts will receive preferential pricing on the following:

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Resort video footage can be included on Interval HD at intervalworld.com.



Sample videos can be found at dgfilmco.com. See how DG Film Company can help achieve crucial marketing goals for your resort property. Contact the company at 435-674-1133 or by email at production@dgfilmco.com.



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- Invoicing and payment processing
- Merchant services including POS transactions
- Delinquency control
- Portfolio management
- Platform as a Service (PAAS)
- On-site transitional staffing
- Document custody services
- Securitization reporting
- Backup reporting
- Data collection analytics (BITS)
- Disaster recovery plans



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- Inventory control
- Title insurance
- Trustee assistance
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*Excluding pricing that is set by local, state, or federal governments.



To learn more, contact Kerri Luther, national director of business development, at timeshare@fnf.com.



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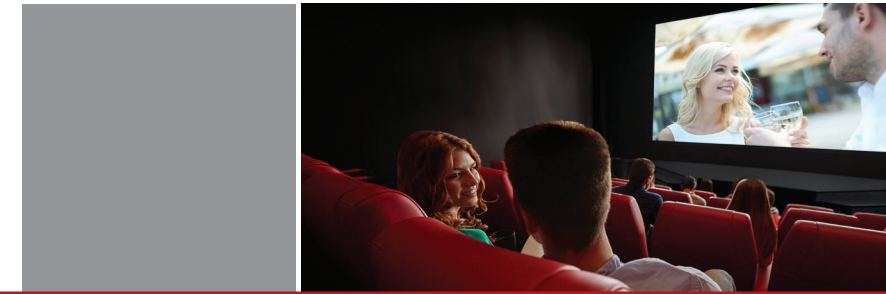
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To learn more, contact:
Chris Rogers, vice president,
800-257-7858, ext. 4459; crogers@harborlinen.com
Tammy Potis, sales executive,
800-257-7858, ext. 4413; tpotis@harborlinen.com



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866-294-7120, ext. 6705; gsheperd@merid.com
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For more detailed information, please contact
Ken Hoffman, CEO, at 949-842-6418 or
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What is one thing we can do to cater to the interests of the developing millennial market?



MIKE DUDICK, CEO AND OWNER/DEVELOPER, BRECKENRIDGE GRAND VACATIONS

Dudick: “Millennials are one of the best things to happen to travel. We know they love experiences over ‘things,’ and budget significant percentages of their income for travel. Being connected is a necessity, so we are doing what we can to increase our resorts’ connectivity, for all our guests, so that images and experiences can be shared easily and quickly.”

Comito: “Educate, educate, educate! Through our annual Caribbean Hospitality Industry Exchange Forum, ongoing webinars, and various communications media, we are constantly helping our members understand customer motivations, communicating with them on their terms using multiple channels, and offering products and services that appeal to them.”



FRANK COMITO, CEO AND GENERAL DIRECTOR, CARIBBEAN HOTEL & TOURISM ASSOCIATION

DePoy: “According to a study by the ARDA International Foundation (AIF), nearly half of timeshare owners want resorts to offer more budget-friendly excursions. And millennials are one of the largest groups of travelers looking for authentic experiences on a budget. Also, travel websites must be interactive, easy to use, and scalable to a mobile device.”

Gardner-Bougaard: “In an exceptionally competitive market, the industry needs to make sure it understands the needs of this group. Developers must make sure their resorts are in the digital age and have Wi-Fi readily available in units. Holidays for this group are all about the experience, so there must be access to both sports and adventure-type opportunities.”



SANDRA DEPOY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF FEDERAL AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS, AMERICAN RESORT DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION



PAUL GARDNER-BOUGAARD, CEO, RESORT DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION



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