

ADVISORY

THAILAND

The Oriental, Bangkok



Kurt Wachtveitl, general manager, has spent millions redoing the rooms and suites at the Oriental, Bangkok – well known as the world's best hotel. It's been a four-year program of complete renova-

tion of the River Wing and the Authors Suites.

The Oriental is still unsurpassed in service. It still has the best restaurants. It still has the most romantic river cruise. It still has the finest shops. And it still has the most attentive, service-oriented staff in the world.

How Kurt Wachtveitl has put it all together is the envy of every hotelier from the rest of the world. But he has and continues the emphasis on quality, which is why you should try to book

at the Oriental early, since the best is always popular.

Deluxe Garden Wing room (left), The Authors' Wing (top, right), and The Authors' Lounge



NEW YORK

Hotel Plaza Athénée

It seems that all the four- and five-star hotels are calling themselves the best.

There's a big difference, however, in regard to service. Among the best is the Plaza Athénée in New York City. Can you believe a concierge that provides Palm

Pilot compatible programs with a currency converter; a world clock that shows time in five zones; a clothing-size converter; a metric-English converter for temperature, distance, and weight; an international telephone dialer; and your most important telephone numbers? Several of the hotel's concierges are members of the prestigious Les Clefs d'Or association.

Add to that one of the

best restaurants in the city, Arabelle. Raymond Saja, the executive chef, prepares prize-winning dishes that combine ideas so exciting that others try to steal them.

Bernard Lackner is the general manager and he's assembled a European-style hotel with some of the most beautiful guest rooms and suites, including rose aurora marble baths, two-line speaker phones, high-speed Internet access, but also Filo Doro 100-percent Egyptian cotton linens and Aigner toiletries. Not many hotels have a 65-percent repeat-client ratio. This hotel and its staff can do anything. They even supply Chinese wolfberries for a guest gourmet, which is probably why many other hoteliers call the Plaza Athénée the best as well.



Arabelle restaurant (far left); Executive Red bedroom

ADVISORY

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Conrad Bangkok



This is the top business hotel in Bangkok. The general manager Gregory Meadows has a slogan: “K.I.S.S.” (Keep Improving Service Standards) and he certainly does. This brand new hotel with a new attitude has become the “in place” for the business leader since they’ve installed every possible electronic convenience, including a lot of complimentary plusses for the executive.

In the evening, it’s where the VIPs of Bangkok meet because of the hotel’s unique philosophy. This hotel is competing for attention, mind share, and heart share, and it’s a great value for the money. The hotel is everything except stiff and stuffy, and it maintains graciousness in a high-speed world. As Meadows says, “Grab what’s good; toss the junk!” He has certainly assembled the best in efficiency and in service and an attitude that makes you feel that you’re the most important guest in the house.



Conrad Bangkok façade (top) and deluxe suite

TEXAS

Four Seasons Hotel Houston

With so much development taking place in Houston these days – the basketball and hockey arena, the light rail system, the convention center expansion, and so on – the city’s downtown area is something to behold. With over four million residents, Houston is now the United States’ fourth-largest city and it is plainly evident that it will continue to grow. The city’s political and planning lead-

ers are making sure that the city’s infrastructure stays well ahead of that growth.

Also keeping pace with the city’s resurgence is downtown Houston’s best hotel, the Four Seasons Hotel Houston. Thanks to its comprehensive, \$15-million renovations (with more still to come), this hotel, built in 1982, seems like it was erected only yesterday. With 404 guest rooms and suites, the Four Seasons Hotel Houston is the third largest among the 62 Four Seasons properties around the world. Marking this Four Seasons property as unique is its four private dining rooms and its large conference facilities, which all possess state-of-the-art, high-speed internet-access equipment and hook-up capability. Its new Quattro restaurant has also become the “in place” to dine in Houston.

General Manager Mark Hellrung, a native Houstonian, likes to say that the Four Seasons Hotel Houston “is a barometer for Houston’s luxury hotel market.” He is right, in more ways than one.



Presidential Suite bedroom (left) and pool