

# LEADERS IN *Hospitality*

## Catering to the Longer-Term Guest

An Interview with Hilary J. James,  
General Manager, Bristol Plaza

**EDITORS' NOTE** *Educated in England, Hilary James began her career in the film industry and held positions with Columbia Pictures, 20th Century Fox, and Warner Bros. She also founded her own theater production company and won an OBIE Award for Michael Burrell's Hess. As a marketing executive and Director of Sales for Bristol Plaza's developer, Howard Milstein, she was instrumental in the development and management of the luxury residential hotel. She assumed her current role in April 1989.*



Hilary J. James

**PROPERTY BRIEF** *Bristol Plaza ([www.bristolplaza.com](http://www.bristolplaza.com)) is a luxury residential hotel created to meet the needs of people planning long-term stays in Manhattan. Its 152 suites feature fully equipped kitchens for home dining, and the property boasts a health club, swimming pool, and sun deck.*

**The travel and tourism industry has been deeply affected by the global economic crisis. How much of an impact have you seen on Bristol Plaza, and what is your outlook for the property for 2010?**

Needless to say, everyone in the hotel industry has been adversely affected by the downturn in the economy, and Bristol Plaza has seen fewer reservations over the course of the year than would normally have been expected. However, we were pleased to see considerable improvement in bookings beginning in September and continuing through to the end of the year. With all indicators pointing towards a steady, albeit slow, recovery we are optimistic that the multinational corporations and financial institutions will again be sending their business colleagues to the city.

**Bristol Plaza caters to guests requiring long-term stays in New York. How do you define the target market for the property, and what is the profile of your guest?**

Bristol Plaza caters to guests requiring accommodation for considerably longer periods than the average short-term stay in the city. Our tenant profiles include those relocating to the city who require long-term housing while seeking a permanent home; those who are renovating their home and need accommodation for their families; and those who have had catastrophic damage to

their homes and have to relocate until extensive repairs are made. Many of our tenants are from the worlds of industry and banking as well as those involved in politics and the arts. There are also those who come once or twice a year to attend theater, opera, and concert programs and to see relatives who live in the city.

**There seems to constantly be developments taking place at the property. Would you highlight some of the plans for the property that guests can expect in the coming years?**



We are constantly upgrading our hotel and facilities and have recently finished redecorating all of our suites. Our gardens have been redesigned and have never looked prettier.

**In such a crowded market, how challenging is it to differentiate from your competitors, and how do you define what makes Bristol Plaza unique?**

While the hotel industry is highly competitive, Bristol Plaza enjoys a unique position in the marketplace. Our minimum monthly stay, ideal location, and advantageous rates combine to make us extremely desirable. Guests enjoy the comfort of the relaxed and peaceful atmosphere of the hotel and very much appreciate the fully equipped kitchens when an evening in is on the agenda.



**How important is the club/rooftop pool to the success of the property, and could you provide an overview of these facilities?**

Our health club is considered one of the most attractive private facilities in the city. Our rooftop swimming pool and landscaped open sun deck are an absolute prerequisite for many of our guests. Our fully-equipped gym boasts the very latest state-of-the-art equipment. The sun-filled lounge and small library offer a comfortable and peaceful oasis away from the bustle of the city.

**As a General Manager, your time is pulled in many different directions. How do you focus your time, and how important is it for you to interact with your guests?**

Spending time with our guests is always one of the most important and enjoyable aspects of my position as General Manager. My office has always been the focal point for residents who know they are welcome to come in at any time to discuss issues or resolve problems.

**As you look to 2010, what are the key priorities that you are focused on for the property?**

Our prime focus for the coming year will be, as always, to



maintain and further our worldwide reputation as the optimum destination for temporary residence in Manhattan. We are, of course, delighted with our ever widening recognition and increasing client recommendations and we are determined that they and our future guests agree that the accolades are well justified. ●

*The elegant lobby, luxurious accommodations, and the newly renovated sun deck (top to bottom)*