

The Plaza Experience

An Interview with Shane Krige, General Manager, The Plaza

EDITORS' NOTE Prior to joining *The Plaza*, Shane Krige was Managing Director at the Mansion on Turtle Creek in Dallas, Texas' only Five Star, Five Diamond hotel, following a time as Manager of the Grosvenor House Hotel and Residences in Park Lane, London. He began his career with Marriott and has held senior management positions with Ritz-Carlton. He holds a bachelor of science degree in hotel management with a minor in business from Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pennsylvania.



Shane Krige

PROPERTY BRIEF As the only New York hotel to be designated a National Historic Landmark, *The Plaza* (www.fairmont.com/theplaza) reopened in March 2008 after a three-year, \$450 million renovation. Under its current owner, Elad Properties and under the management of Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, the century-old hotel was pared down from 805 to 282 guest rooms and suites, and the remainder of the building was converted to private residences. The Grand Ballroom also had a face-lift as part of the extensive renovation, and the new hotel lobby, which now houses the Champagne Bar and the Rose Club, was carved from former meeting rooms and melded with landmark sections of the building, such as the Palm Court, and the Oak Room and the Oak Bar.

How has The Plaza been received since its return to the market?

Guests of The Plaza are not only looking for luxury and value, but they are also looking for an experience. The Plaza restoration has incorporated both historic elements, such as the Grand Ballroom, Terrace Room, and Oak Room and Oak Bar, with new, contemporary hotel additions such as the Rose Club and Shops at The Plaza, ensuring that guests not only receive a magnificent hotel experience, but one that is memorable. The Plaza is a luxury lifestyle destination.

What are the components of the property as it is currently configured?

The Plaza Hotel offers 282 distinctive guest rooms, including 102 suites in seven unique designs and layouts; multiple culinary options including the Champagne Bar, the Rose Club, the Oak Room and Oak Bar; the opulent Grand Ballroom, and the Terrace Room; a Warren-Tricomi hair salon; a Caudalie Vinotherapie® Spa,

featuring a wine lounge that is unique to The Plaza Hotel; and the Shops at The Plaza, which is an exclusive collection of shops featuring leading designers and tastemakers in the worlds of fashion, beauty, decor, and cuisine.

In such a crowded market, how do you differentiate this particular hotel product from that of your competitors?

The Plaza is the only New York City hotel to be designated as a National Historic Landmark, which happened in 1969. Additionally, The

Plaza now has the largest overall square footage of guest rooms and suites of any luxury hotel in New York City, including the 4,400-square-foot Royal Plaza Suite, the hotel's presidential suite, which launched in summer 2009.

The Plaza's hotel elements – the Oak Room and the Oak Bar, Shops at The Plaza, the Rose Club, the Champagne Room, and the Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa – make it a hotel destination that differentiates itself from its comp set.

The Plaza is also located at New York's most celebrated address at the crossroads of Fifth Avenue and Central Park South. For the first time in its history, The Plaza has been awarded its Five-Diamond rating for 2010.

How extensive are your food and beverage offerings?

Culinary options at The Plaza include the elegant Champagne Bar, offering an incomparable selection of champagnes; the Rose Club, which is our stylish new cocktail lounge overlooking the lobby on the mezzanine level, offering an array of signature cocktails and light gourmet fare; and the Oak Room and the Oak Bar, originally opened in 1945, which provide a quintessential New York experience for hotel guests and residents alike.

How have you focused on the spa/fitness facilities for guests who expect such amenities at a hotel of this caliber?

Located on the hotel's fourth floor is the 8,000-square-foot Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa at The Plaza. The Caudalie Vinotherapie Spa brings the vineyard experience to an urban setting, and is reminiscent of the wineries and châteaux where the Caudalie spas are found worldwide, by offering signature treatments in 14 treatment rooms, an 800-square-foot French Paradox Wine Lounge housing a sommelier, a private VIP room for two, and a Vinotherapie

Spa signature barrel bath. The Plaza also offers a fitness center by Radu Physical Culture.

What do you offer the corporate or event guest who is seeking meeting and/or banquet space?

The Plaza is the premier location for events and meetings in New York City. The hotel offers an unprecedented 21,000 square feet of meeting space including the Grand Ballroom and the Terrace Room.

The seven meeting rooms are located on the third floor, and the smallest room can be reserved for as few as 10 people and the largest can be reserved for up to 150 people. All seven rooms can be opened up to create one large space accommodating 450 people.

Depending upon the arrangement of each room, the Grand Ballroom can accommodate from 500 to 700 people, while the Terrace Room can accommodate from 350 to 500 people.

What will guests find at the Shops at The Plaza?

The Shops at The Plaza present a world-class collection of exclusive designers, services, and tastemakers in the worlds of fashion, beauty, decor, and cuisine. Numerous exclusive retailers have chosen Shops at The Plaza to debut their flagship U.S. locations. Unique companies include Krigler, a fifth generation fragrance house; Anna Hu, who specializes in creating one-of-a-kind jewelry pieces; Qiviuk, who offers luxurious yet unusual, high-quality clothing for men and women comprised of the Qiviuk fiber; The Plaza Beauty, which provides an exclusive sampling of the most luxurious, efficacious beauty formulas from internationally renowned brands; and The Plaza Boutique, featuring one-of-a-kind gifts, accessories, and home decor designed exclusively for The Plaza brand.

In an industry where human touch is of paramount importance, what kind of impact has technology had on the business?

The Plaza provides guests with unmatched service and technology including the first-of-its-kind Guest Services Panel, created specifically for The Plaza Hotel by AMX, which provides access to personal butler and concierge assistance and a wide range of hotel and travel services; high-speed wireless Internet access; an IP-based high definition video-on-demand system; wall-mounted flat-screen televisions; and a cutting-edge guest-room electronic locking system. ●

The Plaza Hotel (left); Royal Plaza Suite (right)

