

# Hospitality

## Enriching Life Experiences

An Interview with Ben Addoms,  
Founder and Chief Marketing Officer,  
The Quintess Collection



The 4,373-square-foot Rat Pack Retreat in La Quinta, California sleeps eight (center);  
the 1,561-square-foot Palace View Penthouse in London sleeps four (right)

**EDITORS' NOTE** Ben Addoms has served as President of Excite@Home's media and marketing services, as well as managed their subsidiary, MatchLogic. He was also Vice President of Polk Company, one of the nation's largest database marketing businesses. Addoms later diversified his investment strategy away from technology and aggressively pursued the development of real estate opportunities both inside and outside the U.S.



Ben Addoms

**COMPANY BRIEF** Founded in 2004, The Quintess Collection ([www.thequintesscollection.com](http://www.thequintesscollection.com)) is a dynamic luxury destination club network that allows members to enjoy care-free and effortless vacations in more than 170 luxury homes and experiences in 60 of the world's most sought-after destinations. Members have access to all homes and experiences across The Quintess Collection and may apply annual dues to Quintess Adventures' experiences. Collection members also benefit from customized travel planning, exclusive relationships with renowned private clubs and resorts, and the expertise of a knowledgeable Member Relations team and local Destination Hosts. Through THE TOUR CLUB and PGA TOUR Experiences, the company offers its corporate clients a unique range of private venues and special events tailored for corporate entertainment that create and strengthen important business relationships.

### What did you see in the market that suggested a need for Quintess? How have you differentiated the brand?

In 2003, we looked closely at Exclusive Resorts and they were doing a phenomenal job in the three- to four-bedroom range, but they weren't focused on the larger freestanding homes nor the privacy associated with them.

So we decided to focus on offering larger homes with better availability, which implied higher home prices and a more expensive membership entry fee.

We believed there was room in the market for two quality players: one focused on a niche that addressed the needs of families and one that wanted to include other families and friends in their travel experience.

At the time, our experience provided a unique alternative to owning a second home; the luxury home rental market had not been established.

We knew that the service level was crucial; it's the country club environment where you are taken care of before you travel, and you have people making sure you're taking the vacations you committed to and that every group's special needs have been taken care of with a high level of service and with a level of intimacy between members and staff that doesn't exist elsewhere.

It's about making it easy enough for people to travel and designing the club so that most of our members can work on vacation, which allows them to travel as they desire.

### Is the member profile only the top-level niche consumer or is it more broad?

You need people with some control over their own time; also, people who have the capital to become members while factoring in their commitment to their annual dues.

Most of our members have a net worth in excess of \$5 million excluding their primary residence; and the average member has somewhere around \$15 million.

This is a discretionary purchase and a lifestyle decision, and it's for someone who is considering buying a second home – most of our members have already done that.

It is a niche market. Our goal is for Quintess to top out at 1,000 members; we are just under 700 today.

### What is your competitive set?

Our focus is on competing with member organizations. We're a phenomenal partner and customer for a lot of the best resorts in the world, so we deal with the One&Only, Aman, Orient-Express – a range of ultra-luxury property resorts – and there we are bringing in people who are ready to spend money and travel a lot. So we're filling the restaurant and making sure the private beach club has activity.

We coexist and cooperate. A lot of our members still can't control their urges to buy another home, so we have members show up and stay with us and decide they love the resort so much that they'll buy another house.

Historically, that relationship has been synergistic and not competitive.

Our primary competition is Exclusive Resorts. Some people stick their toe in the water by trying Inspirato or Portico, which offer more of a rental model as opposed to a country club membership. We're both attempting to solve the

same problem: to make it easy for people to travel with confidence to private homes at great resorts rather than taking their chances on renting a home or dropping a lot of cash to buy another home or resorting to a hotel room.

It's an addictive lifestyle. Our vision from the beginning has been to be a necessity in our members' lives and we measure that every year.

### As you grow, is it more challenging to maintain that intimate feel?

Our goal is typically to add about 100 members a year. The challenge is that we like to know every member, but 1,000 members is still pretty intimate. Our member relations managers act as travel consultants and manage 75 members on average, so it's a personalized level of service.

The hosts that live in the destinations also contact the members before they arrive, plan their entire trip, meet them upon arrival, and take care of everything while they're on site.

In joining Quintess, our members value the input that the other members have had in those destinations, like the feedback on private chefs, masseuses or activities, and going back to the same places year after year so they can get to know the hosts and become part of an extended community.

### With your entrepreneurial mindset, are you already looking for the next challenge?

We have diversified a bit. We are a holding company. We own several businesses on a partnership basis with the PGA TOUR, so there is a golf dimension and a corporate services dimension to that business that is not size-limited.

We just bought a small company called Time & Place in the ultra-luxury villa rental world, which we believe has a number of potential synergies and alignments with the business.

### Has the word "luxury" lost some of its meaning?

We haven't deviated from our standards at the property or from our service levels – the definition of luxury from a member's perspective is the cumulative member experience.

Wealthy people who were once focused on spending money on material things have now shifted toward acquiring experiences.

Therefore, luxury is about giving people quality time back; you're never going to have a day on vacation with us that you feel was wasted.

We spend most of our time talking about how to make it easier for people to travel and to enjoy themselves while they're traveling, so that enrichment of life experience that they're paying us for is what luxury is about. ●