



Elevating the Guest Experience

An Interview with Susanne Hatje,
General Manager, Mandarin Oriental, New York



Asiate with its city views (left); Time Warner Center at dusk (above)

EDITORS' NOTE In June 2013, Susanne Hatje assumed her current post. She has over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry and has held senior management positions at Mandarin Oriental for the past 13 years. Her previous post was as Group Director of Residences and earlier she was the launch General Manager at Mandarin Oriental, Boston and The Landmark Mandarin Oriental, Hong Kong. She was also General Manager of Mandarin Oriental, Munich and Resort Manager at Kabala Mandarin Oriental, Hawaii. Earlier in her career, Hatje worked in New York City as Assistant Manager of The Mark, New York, when the property was part of Rafael Hotels Ltd. She entered the hotel industry in 1988 as an apprentice at Atlantic Hotel Kempinski in Hamburg. She furthered her education with a hospitality management program at New York's Cornell University and has also received a Master of Business Administration from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) in Australia.



Susanne Hatje

PROPERTY BRIEF Mandarin Oriental, New York (www.mandarinoriental.com/newyork) features 244 elegant guest rooms and suites, all with breathtaking views of Manhattan and Five Star hospitality. Luxurious amenities include Asiate, the hotel's elegant restaurant; MObar, created by noted interior designer, Tony Chi; the Lobby Lounge with dramatic views of Central Park; a 14,500-square-foot, Five-Star Mandarin Oriental Spa; and a state-of-the-art fitness center with a 75-foot lap pool. There is also premium meeting and event space, including a 6,000-square-foot pillar-less ballroom with three walls of windows overlooking Central Park. Located in Columbus Circle's Time Warner Center, Mandarin Oriental, New York is just steps away from world-class dining, shopping, and entertainment, including the Broadway Theater District, Lincoln Center, Central Park, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and the Time Warner Center's collection of upscale retail shops and restaurants. Mandarin Oriental, New York is consistently a leader in the market.

What makes the property so special and helps it perform so well year after year?

Mandarin Oriental, New York offers guests an unparalleled location close to premier shopping on Fifth Avenue, the midtown business district, Times Square, and Broadway; well-appointed guest rooms and suites with floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking

the city skyline; a renowned culinary experience; and an award-winning Five-Star Spa. The hotel's success lies with its dedicated team of colleagues, many of which have been with the hotel since its opening, who are committed to elevating the guest experience each and every day.

Would you highlight some of the projects that guests can expect in the coming years?

At Mandarin Oriental, New York, our goal is to be an innovative leader in the hospitality industry, and to constantly change and evolve with our guests' needs.

Finding our guests are traveling with multiple Internet-ready devices and require constant connectivity, we recently made a major investment to upgrade our high-speed Internet and increased our bandwidth to a 250 Mbps fiber optic connection, which offers an unparalleled browsing experience for up to six devices per room. We are celebrating our 10th year and have many exciting new initiatives coming soon that will ensure Mandarin Oriental, New York's position as a top hotel destination in New York City.

Would you provide an overview of your suites and the importance of having such a broad offering in this regard?

Mandarin Oriental, New York's 46 elegantly appointed suites offer guests a distinct setting and stylish contemporary design. Each suite is located at the corners of the building to offer stunning floor-to-ceiling views of the Manhattan skyline, Central Park, and the Hudson River.

The generously sized suites range from 800 to 3,300 square feet, and have been designed in a way that we are able to tailor the layout to the needs of individual guests or families. Our one-of-a-kind signature suites were designed with unique touches to ensure that no two experiences are the same. This broad offering of suites gives the hotel the flexibility to cater to unique requests.

How has Asiate evolved over the years, and does it enjoy local support?

Asiate presents one of the most distinctive dining experiences in Manhattan with contemporary American cuisine that is creatively accented with modern, artistic touches. A combination of gracious service, inventive fare, stylish ambiance, and striking Central Park views ensure that the restaurant is a hit with both guests and locals alike. Asiate's location within Mandarin Oriental, New York and Time Warner Center offers an idyllic setting that is close to all major attractions, making it a culinary

destination in New York City. To continue to capture the interests from the local community, Asiate offers a menu that changes seasonally. The restaurant recently introduced monthly wine dinners hosted by some of the world's most exclusive wineries and, in 2014, will be welcoming a series of guest chefs from around the globe.

How important is a high-level spa offering for a luxury hotel today, and would you provide an overview of your spa facilities?

Our spa welcomes guests with a range of experiences and journeys in luxurious and soothing surroundings that is unlike any other in New York City. The beautifully designed space offers the city skyline as its backdrop and décor that has Eastern influences with contemporary New York touches. The Five-Star Spa is set on the 35th floor of the hotel and features seven multipurpose treatment rooms, unparalleled heat experiences featuring vitality pools with oxygen-enriched water, and relaxation lounges. We also have a 14,500-square-foot fitness center on the 36th floor that has the latest equipment, as well as a 75-foot lap pool that offers glimpses of the Hudson River.

How are you able to provide such consistent service for the guest and how do you measure your service standards?

At the Five-Star level, consistency and the ability to customize each stay are key elements in delivering exceptional service. A great number of our colleagues have been with the property since opening 10 years ago and remain committed to working together to deliver the best possible guest experience. By carefully watching and listening to every hotel guest, our colleagues are able to anticipate their needs and personalize each stay. We monitor and measure guest feedback so that we can continuously improve and maintain the high caliber of service for which we are known.

For 2014, what are you focused on to make sure that you maintain your leadership position within the industry?

We remain committed to delighting and satisfying our guests by providing innovative experiences and passionate service in an extraordinary setting. We will continue to monitor industry trends and technological advances to exceed our guests' expectations. By continuously evolving our product while maintaining high service standards, we will remain a leader within New York City's hospitality community.

My own goal in leading the Mandarin Oriental, New York team is to continue to provide a consistently high level of service that will drive innovation and ensure our guests' loyalty for the coming decades. ●