

Hospitality

Creating Meaningful Connections

An Interview with Jennifer Fox,
President, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts and
President, International, FRHI Hotels & Resorts



The Savoy, A Fairmont Managed Hotel in London, was fully refurbished in .

EDITORS' NOTE Jennifer Fox assumed her current post in 2011. Prior to joining Fairmont, she spent 10 years at InterContinental Hotels Group where she was Chief Operating Officer, Europe. She also served as Senior Vice President-Global Brand Management for InterContinental Hotels & Resorts. Previously, Fox spent 13 years at Starwood/Sheraton where she held several senior management, General Manager, and marketing positions including Vice President Global Brand Manager for the Sheraton brand. She holds a doctorate in Business Administration from the International School of Management in Paris, France and an M.B.A. from Baylor University.



Jennifer Fox

COMPANY BRIEF Fairmont Hotels & Resorts (fairmont.com) is a celebrated collection of more than 65 luxury properties around the globe including The Plaza in New York, London's The Savoy, Fairmont Peace Hotel in Shanghai, and Quebec City's Fairmont Le Château Frontenac. Fairmont is recognized internationally for its responsible tourism practices and award-winning Fairmont Sustainability Partnership. Fairmont is owned by FRHI Hotels & Resorts, a leading global hotel company with over 110 hotels under the Fairmont, Raffles, and Swissôtel brands.

How do you define a true luxury hotel experience and has it become more about customization of the guest experience?

For luxury hotel operators, the need to deliver a tailored and bespoke experience is critical, and brands that can truly deliver on this will be successful. Technology plays a significant role in this. For example, our Fairmont Fit program provides frequent guests with fitness attire to use during their stay. We can anticipate this need using their customized guest profile and deliver against their expectation. Also, personalization can come in many different forms, which is why we offer mobile check-in to guests at select locations.

At Fairmont, our vision of a truly luxurious hotel experience absolutely consists of listening to our guest's specific travel desires and needs. We acknowledge that our guests may have multiple purposes for travel, whether it is a family vacation, a business trip, or both. We strive to personalize their experiences while maintaining the consistent best practices and standards for which our brand is known. We also focus on innovation and developing new services, benefits, and guest programming,

often in partnership with leading lifestyle brands, to further enhance the stay experience.

In support of this promise to deliver a personalized and memorable stay for our guests, our hotels also provide thoughtful and engaging service. Service is the very foundation of our business, and while it's no longer a point of differentiation, it does remain an expectation. I like to think of this as the cost of entry for playing in the luxury space.

What are the key characteristics of a Fairmont hotel and how do you define the Fairmont difference?

Fairmont's brand promise is to create meaningful connections with guests – linking them with genuine experiences and the very best the destination has to offer. While this comes to life in many different ways at our hotels around the world, we never lose sight of this key priority.

We help foster authentic and genuine experiences by serving as a “gateway to our destinations,” connecting our guests with the best of each locale. This could mean learning about local Hawaiian culture with an outrigger canoe outing at the Fairmont Kea Lani, dining on locally inspired cuisine at Vancouver's Fairmont Pacific Rim, or checking in to the historic American Bar at The Savoy in London.

Fairmont properties are immersed in each destination's culture and history, and this is reflected through locally inspired cuisine, distinctive design, and decor. They're integrated with the local community, embody a sense of place, and serve as social hubs for locals and visitors alike. Often they are unrivalled and distinctive in nature; they are buildings where guests feel like they've officially arrived.

A strong social standing within the local community is also a defining characteristic of a Fairmont hotel. Proudly, Fairmont and its hotels have been leaders in environmental stewardship for more than two decades, and this commitment recently expanded to include economic and social programming. Through the Fairmont Sustainability Partnership, our goal is to continually improve and enhance the overall well-being of local communities where we do business.

Are there key markets that offer greater opportunities for expansion and what are your plans to introduce new properties?

Growth, particularly in key strategic markets, is one of our top priorities. Recently, we expanded with two conversions in Barcelona

and Bali: Fairmont Rey Juan Carlos I, Barcelona and Fairmont Sanur Beach Bali. Early in 2015 we will open a new Fairmont hotel in Jakarta. Fairmont's sister brand Raffles will also open in Jakarta at the same time.

The larger FRHI Hotels & Resorts group, which includes the Raffles and Swissôtel brands in addition to Fairmont, expects to grow by 50 percent over the next five years. Right now, FRHI has more than 40 active hotels in its development pipeline and we look forward to growing our footprint in key strategic markets throughout Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, while also strengthening our position in North America. We continue to look for opportunities in leading economic centers, gateway cities and sought-after resort locales. We are looking for development opportunities in major European cities, and have already jumped ahead on that with our recent acquisition in Barcelona. In Asia, we look forward to the opening of Fairmont Jakarta, and cities across China as well as Hong Kong are on our radar. The Middle East region is also ripe with opportunity and we see great potential for future expansion here.

How critical is it for Fairmont Hotels & Resorts to build a diverse and inclusive workforce?

Exceptional guest service acts as the basic foundation for everything we do at Fairmont. We continue to deliver exceptional service in some of the world's most celebrated addresses. This is a result of a truly engaged and committed global workforce. We promote an employee culture that encourages professional development and growth opportunities from within, building a loyal and experienced colleague base that is passionate about providing meaningful guest experiences.

Along with our unrivalled portfolio of hotels, we are most proud of our truly remarkable colleagues – they are the heart and soul of our company. In the luxury hotel sector, great service is a must and we believe there is a direct correlation between the financial performance and success of a company and the level to which colleagues are engaged, and delivering against the brand's promise. Additionally, we are very aware of the importance of finding the right individuals for the right positions, and believe natural talent and strengths can be developed and result in greater job satisfaction, productivity, and length of tenure. The result: colleagues that are equipped to deliver the kind of authentic, warm, and engaging service that creates memories and drives guest loyalty. ●