



A Unique Sense of Place

An Interview with Todd Orlich,
General Manager, Montage Beverly Hills



The Montage Beverly Hills mineral pool (left) and entrance (above)

EDITORS' NOTE A 13-year associate of Montage Hotels & Resorts, Todd Orlich joined Montage Laguna Beach on the pre-opening team in 2002 as Food and Beverage Director. Orlich went on to join the Montage Beverly Hills pre-opening team as the Hotel Manager in 2007. In 2010, he was named General Manager for Montage Laguna Beach before returning to Montage Beverly Hills in the summer of 2014 as the hotel's General Manager. Orlich started his hospitality career in leadership positions at Loews Ventana Canyon in Tucson, Arizona and The Phoenician Resort in Scottsdale, Arizona. Orlich earned a Bachelor's Degree in Business Communications and Finance from the University of Arizona.



Todd Orlich

PROPERTY BRIEF Located in the vibrant epicenter of Los Angeles, Montage Beverly Hills (montagehotels.com/beverlyhills) is ideally situated for shopping and dining among Rodeo Drive's storied collection of luxury boutiques, restaurants, and galleries. The hotel features 201 well-appointed guestrooms, including 55 suites as well as 20 private Residences. Spa Montage offers an urban oasis with a private relaxation space, a co-ed mineral pool, and 17 tranquil treatment rooms. The Five Star spa is also home to the flagship full-service Kim V Salon. Italian cuisine is impeccably served at celebrity Chef Scott Conant's culinary gem, Scarpetta. Tucked discreetly above Scarpetta, the £10 lounge welcomes true connoisseurs specializing in the world's most precious whiskey, The Macallan Single Malt. Montage Beverly Hills was the first hotel to receive the Gold LEED certification in Southern California.

What does the Montage brand stand for and what characteristics make a property fit into that group?

There are five main characteristics: first, the concept of comfortable luxury, which comes from our CEO and Founder, Alan Fuerstman. Through that, we're building long-term personal relationships with our guests by delivering highly personalized service with humility and grace. Next, we strive to create emotional attachments with our guests. Another component is giving back to the community through Hearts of Montage by taking an active role in serving our community. At least once a month, there is a Hearts of Montage activity for our associates to participate in. Lastly, and this is something the brand has done really well,

is providing a unique sense of place at each property. When I visit Deer Valley, Kapalua Bay, or Laguna Beach, these properties reflect their respective communities. While the architectural design still feels ultra-luxurious, we also focus on whose backyard we are in to ensure Montage Deer Valley feels like a gorgeous mountain lodge while Montage Beverly Hills features Spanish Revival architecture that befits our community.

Is the suite offering a differentiator and how critical is that for your guest demands?

Very important. We attract families and large groups who want to host gatherings around the hotel, so our suite options work well for them.

We have 55 suites, which gives us the largest suite-to-standard guest room combination in the city. This really makes a difference for today's discerning and affluent guests, in particular our international travelers.

Our suites are also important because our guests graduate into those higher suite categories

How challenging is the food and beverage component and what makes for a successful restaurant within the hotel setting?

It's critically important to have a notable restaurant in our hotel. We follow the model of the community we're in. What Scarpetta here has done so well is reflected this community's love of Italian food. The fact that we have more of a modern twist to it differentiates Scarpetta from other Italian restaurants nearby.

We take the wine program very seriously. Roberto Loppi, who is our Lead Sommelier at Scarpetta, has a love and passion for Italian wine so he has developed Scarpetta's list from an Italian point of view.

We also invest a lot into the daily training of our Associates with wine and food tastings to make sure the staff is fully aware of what they're selling.

How critical is it for a destination like yours to have that full spa component?

We're lucky enough to have the only Forbes Five Star spa in Beverly Hills, and we take that very seriously. We have over 20,000 square feet of space featuring resort-style amenities. I appreciate that we have a co-ed mineral pool which offers our guests a unique space to get away from the main pool and be in a more relaxing environment.

It's also important to have a state-of-the-art fitness facility that is large because we have an

active clientele that stays with us. They want to be able to keep up with their exercise routines so it's important we have great trainers in place as well.

The quality of the treatments and emphasis we place on training our therapists are also really important. People want to take care of themselves, and they don't want to forget about their well-being when they're traveling on business or on vacation.

For two years in a row, we have experienced double-digit growth in the spa because people are finding us and coming back to us. Spa Montage has created a loyal clientele of repeat guests.

How do you define a true luxury hotel experience today?

What luxury means now is we have to hire the very best associates who have the character and competence to do the job. We have put an extensive training program in place to set them up for success. By hiring the right people, we can develop an authentic service culture and through that, we're able to generate extraordinary service for our guests.

However, it has to feel authentic. It can't be forced. Luxury is about how we set up our business. We reach out to guests prior to their arrival to make sure they get what they need.

It's also about offering a wide variety of activities for our guests from our children's program to the spa to unique rooftop experiences. Additionally, it's about our culture. There is a feeling that I can ask for anything, and this team is going to find a way to get it done. When staying with us, we need guests to feel that they can ask for something they might not normally ask for because they have the confidence in us that we will deliver.

How critical has your investment in training been in leading the company?

One of the things that makes Montage unique is the number of senior leaders we have in our company who started as waiters, front desk agents, and security officers. They would not have gotten to the next level if we had not invested in their training. What we get from them down the road is somebody who knows the building better, knows the policies and procedures better, knows the rules better, and knows the business and culture better. They cannot just be effective in their own department but they must be effective throughout the entire hotel. This has helped us recruit. It creates loyalty and helps us provide a better product in the end. ●