

## Elevating Humanity's Well-Being

An Interview with Kimberly Rossi, General Manager, Miraval Austin Resort & Spa

**EDITORS' NOTE** Kimberly Rossi has more than 20 years of leadership in all aspects of multi-million-dollar business operations within luxury 5-star hotel, resort, and destination retreat environments. At 18, she ventured into health club membership sales while pursuing education in personal training and teaching aerobics. At 24, Rossi embarked on a year-long journey to Tuscany, Italy, where she worked alongside a spa industry pioneer, gaining invaluable insights and foundational knowledge of the business. Returning to the U.S., she capitalized on this experience and began working at destination spas catering to influential women in Washington, DC, Baltimore, and Lake George, New York where she refined her leadership skills and attained a certification as a yoga teacher. In 2000, Rossi was recruited to develop day spas in the Westport, Connecticut region, where she led two projects from inception to full operational management and established a yoga studio. In 2005, she was



Kimberly Rossi

hired by Cranwell Resort, a distinguished Four Diamond Historic Hotel in Lenox, Massachusetts where she managed a team of 100+ spa professionals while achieving its inaugural \$3 million annual revenue milestone while also attaining an Ayurvedic Consultant certification. In 2007, Rossi was recruited by the Ritz-Carlton as Spa Director in Puerto Rico and became a subject matter expert for Marriott in the Caribbean and Latin America and served on the International Advisory Council. In

2011, she was recruited by Gideon Putnam Hotel in Saratoga Springs to lead their revitalization efforts for a historic mineral springs spa, where she increased revenue by \$1 million. In 2015, Rossi joined the leadership team at Art of Living Retreat Center in Boone, North Carolina where she was commissioned to oversee all retreat center and hotel operations as well as leading an expansion, which increased retreat center revenue by \$12.5 million, and repositioned the Center as a premier Ayurvedic destination.



Miraval Austin Resort & Spa (above) and its Arrival Center (top right)

**PROPERTY BRIEF** Miraval Austin Resort & Spa ([miravalresorts.com/austin](http://miravalresorts.com/austin)) is a luxurious wellness retreat nestled in the picturesque hill country of Austin, Texas. The resort boasts 117 rooms with magnificent views of Lake Travis and Texas Hill Country. Miraval Austin's Life in Balance Spa is an 18,000-square-foot award-winning spa dedicated to enriching the mind-body connection. Guests can enjoy a variety of wellness experiences including yoga, meditation, fitness classes, hiking, biking, and equine activities. The Hilltop Crossings Kitchen provides nutrient-dense, farm-to-table meals inspired by seasonal produce from the on-site Cypress Creek Organic Farm. The property features two infinity pools, a Body Mindfulness Center, and more than 20,000 square feet of indoor-outdoor event space. Miraval Austin is grounded in mindfulness, with a mantra that "life is better when in balance."

### What excited you about the opportunity to join Miraval Austin Resort & Spa?

Miraval Resorts began in 1995, the same year that I started my career in the spa industry, working for one of the founding members of ISPA. There were about a dozen of these "destination spas" as they were called during this time. As time went



on, the spa industry blossomed making spa more accessible and available as every health club, hotel, and salon offered elements of the spa experience. Throughout my career, I have led the wellness component in health clubs, day spas, hotels, resorts, and retreat centers all while personally taking a deep dive into wellness – studying, practicing, and teaching Vedic Science. It has been wonderful to witness the destination spa/wellness resort revival and the union of Hyatt acquiring Miraval. When the opportunity to join this iconic brand presented itself, it was as if my career had come full circle, and it was an invitation to come home. It is my life's purpose to elevate humanity's well-being.

**How do you describe the Miraval Austin Resort & Spa experience?**

The Miraval Austin experience is a transformative and personal wellness experience designed to nurture the connection between body, mind, and spirit. The property is set on over 280 acres of land in the tranquil Balcones Canyonlands Preserve and combines luxurious accommodations with immersive activities like equine therapy, mindfulness workshops, and outdoor adventures. Each stay is customized, allowing guests to unplug, reflect, reconnect in a naturally serene setting – and truly meet them where they are.

**How has Miraval Austin Resort & Spa approached its restaurant/food and beverage offerings?**

The culinary offerings at Miraval Austin embrace a holistic and mindful approach to dining, and seamlessly integrate wellness, sustainability, and artistry. The resort's Hilltop Crossings Kitchen dishes out seasonal, predominantly plant-based menus, sourcing ingredients from our on-site Cypress Creek Farm and local foragers to support the farm-to-table philosophy. Complementing this, the Life in Balance Culinary Kitchen allows guests to experience immersive sessions like cooking classes and



*View from the Miraval Austin Resort & Spa pool*

mixology workshops that help them foster a deeper connection to food and its preparation.

**Will you highlight the Life in Balance Spa's approach to balance and wellness?**

The property's award-winning spa draws on its nurturing setting within the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve to lend a personal approach to well-being, where humans take care of humans through energy and physical touch. The approach here is to offer a naturally inspired serene setting that extends an opportunity for guests to experience a combination of innovation, relaxation, and tradition with experiences and sessions that honor nature, nurture

the body, and refresh the soul. Austin-specific spa experiences include Austin Apothecary Massage, Crystal Energy Balancing, Mother-to-Be experiences, and more.

**Will you discuss Miraval Austin Resort & Spa's focus on offering personalized service and a customized guest experience?**

We strive to extend a completely personalized experience for every guest arriving at Miraval – whatever journey they're on. An integral part of that takes place pre-arrival, where our Experience Planning team will work with each guest to dive deeper into their intentions ahead of their visit and help craft an itinerary that will support those desires.

**How do you define the role of a general manager and what are the keys to being effective in the role?**

The role of a general manager in a wellness resort is to be a leader, teacher, and provider leading a culture of accountability, open communication, and synergy. It involves teaching how to support a guest's well-being journey and creating an environment for colleagues to flourish, all while generating a healthy gross operating profit. Providing the opportunity for all those that step on property to be well physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is also essential.

**What advice do you offer to young people interested in building a career in the hotel industry?**

Your wage is an exchange for fulfilling your job description. When you help others get what they need and want, you get what you need and want. And when you anticipate the expressed and unexpressed wishes of guests, colleagues, your leader, and your business – from your heart – more than you can imagine happens. Serving others is not beneath oneself; it is a true honor and privilege. ●



*The Life in Balance Culinary Kitchen*