

# A Philosophy Of Artistry

An Interview with Marlène Poynder, Managing Director, The Carlyle, A Rosewood Hotel

**EDITORS' NOTE** In her role as Managing Director for The Carlyle, Marlène Poynder brings both heart and vision to steer the New York City icon to new heights. As the first woman to lead the hotel, she proudly carries forward its legacy while shaping its future with ingenuity and care. With decades of global hospitality experience, Poynder brings both perspective and imagination, guided by collaboration, curiosity, and an open mind. A native of Australia, her career has spanned continents and luxury brands, from senior roles with Hyatt Hotels across



Marlène Poynder

Asia and Australia to leading the Waldorf Astoria Chicago and guiding major projects with Hilton Worldwide. Her leadership balances respect for tradition with a bold vision for what's next, viewing The Carlyle as a living expression of art, culture, and community. Beyond the hotel, Poynder contributes to the hospitality ecosystem as a member of NYC Tourism + Conventions, both on the Executive Committee and as Treasurer. Under her direction, The Carlyle continues to draw a constellation of artists and insiders ensuring its cultural resonance defines its legacy for generations to come.

**PROPERTY BRIEF** The Carlyle (rosewoodhotels.com) is a New York icon with an undefinable era of relaxed glamour and grandeur, and the warmth of an Upper East Side private residence. Steps from Central Park and surrounded by cultural treasures like The Metropolitan Museum of Art, this 35-story, 192-room Art Deco legend is a living celebration of artistic culture and community. It's home to the renowned Café Carlyle, the beloved Bemelmans Bar, Dowling's restaurant, and a rich collection of artwork, from Ludwig Bemelmans' iconic murals to contemporary works by local artists.



Café Carlyle

### Will you discuss your career journey?

My career in hospitality has been shaped by a deep passion for service excellence and a readiness to embrace new challenges around the world. Originally from Australia, I began with Hyatt Hotels and then Hilton in senior roles across Asia and Australia, overseeing the openings of luxury properties and managing both new developments and landmark renovations in Australia, New Zealand, and China. In 2015, I moved to the U.S. to become General Manager of the Waldorf Astoria Chicago and then the all-suite Conrad New York Downtown. The teams I've built and collaborated with have been central to every success. I'm also proud to support the wider industry through my work with NYC Tourism + Conventions, serving on the Executive Committee and as Treasurer.

### What excited you about the opportunity to lead The Carlyle?

It's an extraordinary honor to be the first woman to guide this New York icon. Since joining in early 2022, I've helped bring to life Dowling's at The Carlyle, the unveiling of beautifully reimagined suites, and new experiences that surprise and delight our community, while ensuring that beloved spaces like Bemelmans Bar and Café Carlyle remain the legendary gathering places they've always been.

### Will you provide an overview of The Carlyle, and how the property is positioned in the market?

The Carlyle represents a philosophy of artistry that's centered on bringing joy to life. For 95 years, we've offered a magical combination of creativity, performance, and gracious hospitality. We've always believed that life is at its best when it's lived to the fullest, and over generations the hotel has become a second home to many of the world's most distinguished



Bemelmans Bar

and characterful individuals. Guests return time and again to share in our passion for life's most elevated experiences, from Café Carlyle's intimate performances to the timeless charm of Bemelmans Bar.

### How valuable is it for The Carlyle to have such a strong suite product?

Our suites are like Upper East Side pieds-à-terre, beautifully designed with an art-deco residential sensibility. With more than half the hotel dedicated to suites, and many offering distinctive layouts, there's a true sense of discovery each time you stay.

### Will you discuss The Carlyle's approach to food and beverage, and what are the keys to being successful in this part of the business?

At The Carlyle, entertaining is an art form. Our four distinct experiences create an alchemy of imagination and individuality that feels both legendary and alive. These aren't simply bars and restaurants with history; they're living rooms for New Yorkers, Upper East Siders, guests, and visitors. It's that extraordinary mix of people coming together in a way that only happens here. All of this is complemented by generous, intuitive service for a *joie de vivre* that's uniquely The Carlyle.

### How do you define a true luxury hotel experience?

In addition to design and service excellence, I believe a true luxury hotel experience is one that helps you feel connected to living well. It's full of enjoyment and inspiration, but also a sense of being genuinely cared for by a gracious, thoughtful team and feeling that rare sense of belonging.

### Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women in leadership roles in the industry?

Absolutely. At The Carlyle alone, many of our senior leadership positions are held by women, and I'm proud to work alongside such talented colleagues who continue to shape our industry.

### What advice do you offer to young people interested in pursuing a career in the hotel business?

If you bring passion and discipline, you'll find your place. Hospitality is, at its heart, about people – both the guests we care for and the colleagues we grow alongside. Stay curious, keep learning, and build your network. The beauty of this industry is that it can take you anywhere in the world. ●



The Carlyle lobby