

The Art Of Invisible Service

An Interview with Eumi Koh, General Manager, Conrad Nashville

EDITORS' NOTE Eumi Koh serves as General Manager of Conrad Nashville, Nashville's premier luxury hotel. Prior to joining Conrad Nashville, Koh served as the General Manager of the Darcy Hotel, a lifestyle boutique hotel in Washington, DC. During her time at the Darcy, Koh was honored as one of Modern Luxury's DC Power Players in both 2020 and 2021. The Washington Business Journal also spotlighted Koh during her time at the Darcy, celebrating her pivotal role in leading the hotel during some of the toughest of times within the hospitality industry. Koh started her hospitality career over 20 years ago and is a graduate of the University of California, San Diego with a bachelor's degree in management science. Koh also earned an MBA with a focus in hospitality and finance from Les International School of Hotel Management in Switzerland.



Eumi Koh

PROPERTY BRIEF A 13 story luxury flagship anchoring Midtown Nashville's Broadwest development, Conrad Nashville blends modern Southern design with intuitive service—steps from Music Row, Vanderbilt University, and downtown's cultural venues. The hotel features 234 keys (including 24 suites and five wellness rooms), a rooftop pool terrace, three curated dining experiences, and 17,000 square feet of stylish meetings and events space.

Will you provide an overview of Conrad Nashville and discuss how the property is positioned in the market?

Conrad Nashville elevates the traditional Nashville experience through contemporary design and service that feels personal and intentional. What sets us apart is our elegant approach to honoring the city's legacy, culture, and vibrant culinary scene in a way that never feels themed. The hotel serves as a gathering place for locals, with our weekly afternoon tea and unique culinary experiences, while also offering travelers an elevated take on Nashville through local artwork, subtle nods to the city's history, and 234 design-forward, spacious guest rooms and suites.

How valuable is it to have such a strong suite product, and do you see this as a differentiator for Conrad Nashville?

Our suite collection is a real differentiator for Conrad Nashville. With 234 rooms and suites averaging 450 square feet and our 3,000-square-foot

Grand Suite, the only suite in Nashville that can be converted into three separate rooms, we're able to offer travelers an elevated Nashville experience through a luxury lens. The flexibility of our suites also allows us to activate the hotel in unique ways, from past partnerships with fashion brands for private shopping experiences to our recent \$20,000 New Year's Eve suite package in collaboration with Italian loungewear house Silence Please, which featured a private, in-room silent disco. It's exciting to have spaces that can adapt to so many

different experiences while still feeling luxurious and personal.

How has Conrad Nashville approached its restaurant/food and beverage offering, and what are the keys to being successful in this part of the business?

We approach our food and beverage experiences by showcasing global influence on our menus while also prioritizing locally sourced ingredients, making each experience delicately rooted in Nashville. This approach allows locals to enjoy something beyond the typical Nashville staples

while giving travelers a unique glimpse into the city's culinary scene through a distinctly Conrad Nashville lens.

The keys to success are respecting the personality of each space while maintaining high standards and thoughtful execution, which lets us create two very different experiences that still feel connected under a cohesive culinary vision. From themed afternoon teas to monthly wine pairing dinners and bourbon tasting experiences, these activations draw both locals and travelers and help make our restaurants a destination in their own right.

Will you highlight Conrad Nashville's meetings and events capabilities?

Conrad Nashville's second floor offers over 17,000 square feet of flexible indoor and outdoor event space, featuring 11 venues that accommodate groups from 14 to 700 guests. Each space is designed to maximize natural light, and our dedicated events team manages every detail. Whether it's a business meeting, social gathering, or bringing a wedding vision to life, we pride ourselves on providing one of the city's most high-touch, personalized experiences, tailored to each planner's needs.

Will you share your career journey and how you arrived at your current role?



Entrance to Conrad Nashville



King Grand Suite living area

More than 20 years ago, I started from the ground up, which I consider one of my greatest advantages. My first role was in hotel operations, learning the fundamentals of what makes a property run smoothly. I quickly realized that hospitality wasn't just about executing tasks; it was about understanding how every department interconnects to create a seamless guest experience.

Early in my career, I was fortunate to have opportunities that moved me through different departments – from events, to front office, to housekeeping, to finance, to food and beverage. This wasn't always glamorous, but it gave me something invaluable: credibility with my teams and a genuine understanding of the challenges each department faces. When you've worked a front desk during a system failure or managed housekeeping during a sold-out weekend, you lead differently.

The real acceleration in my growth came through being relocated to markets with different cultural expectations of luxury and service which taught me that great hospitality has universal principles, but its expression must be deeply local. I learned to lead teams across cultures, to adapt without compromising standards, and to see the guest experience through entirely new lenses.

I've been privileged to work on property openings and renovations, which are exhilarating but intense experiences. There's nothing quite like building operational systems from scratch or reimagining a property's identity while it remains operational. But perhaps the most formative experiences were turning around underperforming properties. That's where you learn what leadership really means – rebuilding morale, changing culture, making difficult decisions, and proving that transformation is possible when you have the right team and vision.

My current role as General Manager at Conrad Nashville brings all of these experiences together. Urban properties have a unique energy – we're not just competing with other hotels, but with the

entire city. Our guests often have deep familiarity with luxury hospitality, and they're choosing us in a market with countless options. That requires constant innovation while maintaining the consistent excellence that defines true luxury.

Every step of this journey reinforced that hospitality leadership isn't about a title – it's about your ability to inspire teams, anticipate what guests need before they ask, and create experiences that matter. The path from entry-level operations to this role wasn't linear, but every detour taught me something essential.

What does luxury mean to you in today's hospitality landscape?

Luxury has evolved far beyond thread counts and marble bathrooms. Today's luxury guests arrive with expectations that would have seemed contradictory a decade ago. They want to be known but not observed. They want authentic local experiences but with flawless execution. They want spontaneity that's been carefully orchestrated. Meeting these expectations requires a fundamentally different approach to luxury hospitality. But beneath all of these expectations is something deeper and profoundly human: the need to feel truly seen and understood. In a world where so much interaction has become transactional and algorithmic, luxury is about genuine human connection. It's the moment when a guest realizes we've remembered not just their room preference, but that they're here to celebrate a milestone, or escape a difficult week, or reconnect with someone important to them. That recognition – that someone noticed, someone cared – is what transforms a stay from excellent to unforgettable. True luxury is the art of invisible service that feels effortless yet demonstrates deep care.

Privacy and discretion have become paramount precisely because they honor the guest as an individual. In an age where everything is shared and documented, luxury means creating sanctuary – not just physical spaces, but emotional

refuge where guests can let down their guard. We've trained our teams to read the unspoken, to sense when engagement deepens connection and when quiet invisibility is the greatest gift we can offer.

Ultimately, modern luxury is about emotional intelligence at scale. It's earning the trust that allows guests to be vulnerable enough to share what truly matters to them. It's the assurance that we'll anticipate needs they haven't voiced, protect what's precious to them, and create experiences that resonate on a human level. That emotional connection – that feeling of being genuinely understood – is what separates true luxury from simply premium service.

What has made the hospitality industry so special for you?

Hospitality is one of the few industries where you can see the direct impact of your work in real time – in a couple celebrating their anniversary, in a business traveler who finally relaxes after a difficult week, in a family creating memories they'll carry for a lifetime. There's something human about creating space for people's most important moments.

What keeps me passionate is the complexity beneath what appears simple. Every seamless guest experience represents hundreds of moving parts orchestrated by talented teams – housekeeping, culinary, front desk, maintenance, concierge – all working in concert. As a leader, I get to shape the culture that makes that magic possible. The challenge of building teams that genuinely care, anticipating needs before they arise, and constantly innovating while honoring timeless principles of service is what makes this industry endlessly engaging.

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

The opportunities are definitely growing, and I've seen meaningful progress. Hospitality has traditionally been more open to women in leadership compared to some industries, perhaps because skills like emotional intelligence, relationship building, and creating welcoming environments – qualities women are often socialized to develop – are so central to our success. I've witnessed more women moving into general manager and regional leadership positions, and we're starting to see better representation at the C-suite level.

That said, we still face real challenges. The demanding hours and expectation of constant availability can make it difficult to advance while managing family responsibilities – a burden that still falls disproportionately on women. There's also the persistent issue of women being overrepresented in certain departments like HR or sales while underrepresented in operations and revenue management, the traditional pipelines to top leadership.

The industry needs to be more intentional about sponsorship, not just mentorship – actively advocating for women to take on P&L responsibility and high-visibility roles. We also need to normalize flexible leadership models and judge people on results rather than face time. The opportunities are there, but we have work to do in ensuring they're equally accessible and that once women reach leadership positions, they have the support structures to thrive and stay. ●