

Understanding The Individual Guest

An Interview with Gabriel Soanca, General Manager, Trump International Hotel & Tower New York

EDITORS' NOTE With more than 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Gabriel Soanca is the General Manager for Trump International Hotel & Tower New York. In 2018, Soanca joined Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago where he championed the management team resulting in Forbes Five-Star and AAA Five-Diamond rankings for multiple consecutive years. Prior to that, Soanca served as the Executive Assistant Manager at the InterContinental Washington D.C. – The Wharf after receiving top recognition at the iconic Trump National Doral in Miami as Director of Food and Beverage. Additionally, he was a vital member of the task force supporting the grand opening of the highly anticipated Trump International Hotel Washington D.C. in 2016. Soanca is a former professional European athlete who still enjoys taking part in a soccer game with his local community team.



Gabriel Soanca

Will you provide an overview of Trump International Hotel & Tower New York, and how the property is positioned in the market?

Trump International Hotel & Tower New York is truly one of the most distinctive luxury hotels in Manhattan. Located at the iconic corner of Central Park West and Columbus Circle, the property offers something very unique – the privacy and comfort of a luxury residence combined with the service and attention of a five-star hotel. Our location is one of our greatest strengths. Being directly across from Central Park and near Lincoln Center gives our guests immediate access to some of New York's most celebrated cultural and lifestyle experiences.

The hotel features 176 beautifully appointed rooms and suites, many with breathtaking views of Central Park and the Manhattan skyline. We are also fortunate to be home to Jean-Georges,

our renowned two-Michelin-starred restaurant, which has helped establish the hotel as both a luxury hospitality destination and a culinary landmark. We also offer Jean-Georges via in-room dining.

What truly sets us apart is the combination of residential-style accommodations, personalized service through our Trump Attaché program, world-class dining, and our commitment to creating a stay that feels less like a hotel visit and more like coming home.

How valuable is it to have such a strong suite product, and do you see this as a differentiator for Trump International Hotel & Tower New York?

Our suite product is one of our biggest differentiators. Today's luxury traveler is looking for more than just a beautiful room – they seek comfort, flexibility, and a sense of home and our residential-style suites provide exactly that. Many feature full kitchens, spacious living areas, and floor-to-ceiling windows with incredible views of Central Park

Will you discuss your career journey?

My career journey has been shaped by more than twenty years in luxury hospitality with a focus on operational excellence, team leadership, and creating memorable guest experiences. Since June 2022, I have had the privilege of serving as the General Manager at Trump International Hotel & Tower New York where I oversee all aspects of the property's operations. One of the accomplishments I am most proud of during my time here is continuing to uphold our Forbes Five-Star recognition and maintaining the level of service our guests expect.

Prior to coming to New York, I had the opportunity to lead in several diverse and challenging environments. I served as Executive Assistant Manager at InterContinental Washington D.C. – The Wharf, Director of Food & Beverage Operations at Trump National Doral Miami, and was also part of the taskforce team supporting the opening of Trump International Hotel Washington D.C. in 2016.

Throughout my career, my approach has remained consistent: building strong teams, creating efficient operations, maximizing performance, and never compromising on the guest experience. That philosophy also helped us achieve and maintain Forbes Five-Star and AAA Four-Diamond recognition during my time at Trump International Hotel & Tower Chicago.



Park view two-bedroom suite living area

and the city. This is especially valuable for families, international travelers, and executives who may be staying for extended periods. The ability to offer the privacy and convenience of a residence while still providing Forbes Five-Star service creates a unique experience. Guests can enjoy the independence of a home environment while having every detail taken care of by our team.

Will you elaborate on the value of having Jean-Georges as part of Trump International Hotel & Tower New York?

Our food and beverage offerings have always been an important part of the identity of Trump International Hotel & Tower New York, and a major part of that success comes from our long-standing partnership with Chef Jean-Georges Vongerichten. For more than 29 years, Jean-Georges has helped make the property a true culinary destination. Guests can enjoy the exceptional fine dining experience at Jean-Georges, our two-Michelin-starred restaurant, as well as the more relaxed yet equally refined atmosphere at Nougatine by Jean-Georges.

I would say that the key to success here is consistency. Whether a guest is dining in the restaurant, enjoying a meal in their suite, or celebrating a special occasion, the quality, service, and attention to detail must remain the same. Our incredible views of Central Park, beautiful dining spaces, and seasonal outdoor patio also create an atmosphere that makes the experience memorable beyond just the food.

Will you discuss Trump International Hotel & Tower New York's focus on offering personalized service and a customized guest experience?

At the luxury level, service is not just about meeting expectations; it is about understanding the individual guest. Our goal is to always make every guest feel recognized and genuinely cared for. Through our Trump Attaché program, we focus on learning preferences, anticipating needs, and creating experiences that feel personal rather than standard. That might mean preparing a suite with a guest's favorite items before arrival, arranging a customized experience for a family, or making sure a returning guest's preferences are already known before they arrive. The greatest compliment we can receive is when a guest feels that the hotel understands them. We want people to feel less like they are staying somewhere and more like they are returning to a place that feels familiar.

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

I believe the general manager's role is to be the leader who connects the vision of the owners, the needs of the guests, and the success of the team. A hotel's reputation is built through thousands of daily interactions, and a general manager cannot personally oversee every moment. The key is creating a culture where every employee understands the importance of their role and feels empowered to make decisions. The best service comes from engaged,

confident teams. When employees feel valued and trusted, they naturally deliver better experiences for guests.

At the same time, a general manager must balance service excellence with financial responsibility. Protecting the long-term success of the property means making thoughtful decisions that support profitability while never compromising the guest or employee experience.

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

My advice to anyone entering hospitality is to approach it as a craft. The best hospitality

professionals are the ones who pay attention to the details, stay curious, and never stop learning. Luxury is not just about beautiful surroundings; it is about anticipating needs, solving problems, and creating moments that guests remember.

This industry requires commitment, resilience, and a willingness to learn from every experience. Every position, no matter where you start, teaches you something valuable about the overall operation. Take pride in your work, support your team, and embrace every challenge as an opportunity to grow. The standards you set today will shape the leader you become tomorrow. ●



View of Central Park from a park view suite