

A Dynamic Waterfront Destination

An Interview with Pascal Forotti, General Manager, Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf

EDITORS' NOTE *Pascal Forotti is a highly accomplished and passionate hotelier with an extensive background in operating luxury hotels and resorts across multiple continents. Known for his creative and innovative leadership, Forotti thrives in environments where he can coach and inspire teams to achieve excellence in both customer experience and organizational success. Throughout his career, Forotti has successfully overseen multi-million-dollar renovations,*



Pascal Forotti

reflagging and repositioning projects, and the opening of brand-new flagship properties. He is an expert at developing and communicating strategies that consistently exceed revenue goals while building strong, trusted relationships with ownership partners. Currently, Forotti serves as the General Manager at Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf (pendry.com/washington-dc), and was a driving force behind the successful launch of the luxury property in 2022. By cultivating a high-performance culture from the ground up and mentoring a world-class executive team, he has successfully positioned the property as a market leader in luxury hospitality. Prior to his current role, Forotti was the Managing Director of the iconic Watergate Hotel in Washington, DC. There, he focused on strengthening brand recognition and maintaining the high standards of an independently run luxury landmark. Forotti's career is defined by his ability to create positive work environments, develop future leaders, and deliver on the promise of luxury hospitality.

Will you discuss your career journey?

From an early age, hospitality was not just an interest but a clear calling. Originally from Luxembourg, I chose to pursue a career in the culinary and service industry while still young, enrolling in a hotel school in my home country. My entire secondary education – five formative years – was dedicated to mastering both the culinary arts and the fundamentals of service, laying a strong foundation for what would become a lifelong profession. Eager to expand my expertise, I continued my studies in Brussels, Belgium, where I earned a degree in Hotel Management. This academic experience, paired with practical training, prepared me for the next step: entering the global hospitality industry.

I began my professional journey at the front desk of the InterContinental Hotel in Luxembourg. What started as an entry-level role quickly became the launchpad for steady growth. Over the course of 17 years with InterContinental Hotels Group, I climbed the ranks across seven different properties, ultimately achieving the role of General Manager. Each move brought new challenges, broader responsibilities, and invaluable international experience.

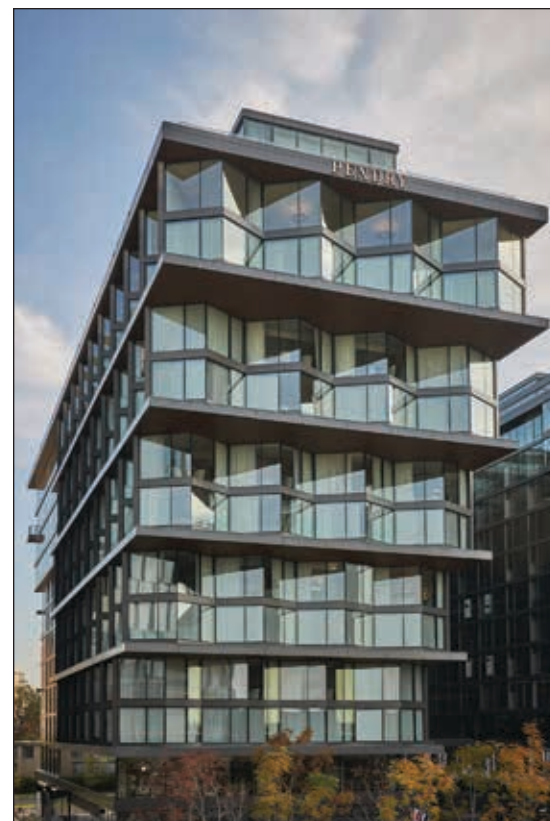
Following this chapter, I was fortunate to join Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, where I held senior leadership roles in both New York City and Costa Rica. Serving as General Manager in these diverse and dynamic locations allowed me to refine my leadership style and deepen my understanding of luxury hospitality on a global scale.

My journey eventually brought me to Washington, DC, where I played a key role in the reflagging of the Rosewood Hotel and later managed the iconic Watergate Hotel. These experiences further strengthened my connection to the D.C. hospitality scene and its vibrant, evolving market.

In early 2022, I joined Montage International to lead the newly opened Pendry Hotel at The Wharf. Since day one, the experience has been both fulfilling and inspiring. Being part of a new property in such a dynamic waterfront destination has allowed me to bring together decades of experience with a fresh vision for modern luxury. Reflecting on this journey, it has been one defined by passion, continuous learning, and the privilege of working with exceptional teams around the world.

Will you provide an overview of Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf?

Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf is a 12-story luxury boutique hotel situated along the Southwest waterfront district. Designed by architectural firm ODA with interiors by DesignAgency, the property features a mid-century modern aesthetic characterized by light-flooded spaces, chevron wood flooring, and industrial metal detailing that departs from traditional neoclassical hotel design. The hotel accommodates guests in 131 rooms, including 38 suites, which are styled with white walls, arched entryways, and black metal four-poster beds, with many layouts featuring floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Potomac



Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf

River. Food and beverage concepts include Bar Pendry, a low-lit lobby cocktail lounge; and Moonraker, a rooftop venue serving Japanese-inspired small plates and whiskies with panoramic river views. Additional amenities comprise a full-service spa with five treatment rooms, a 24-hour fitness center, and a location within walking distance of the National Mall and other city landmarks.

How critical has it been to build the executive team at the property?

When it comes to hiring for leadership roles, we place great value on both cultural alignment and diverse experience. We always welcome leaders from within Montage International and Pendry properties, as they already understand our values, standards, and brand culture. Their ability to step in and make an immediate impact is invaluable, helping to reinforce and strengthen the identity of the brand from day one.

At the same time, we actively seek out leaders who bring passion for the hospitality industry and a breadth of global experience. Individuals who have worked with other

respected brands or have traveled extensively often contribute fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a deep appreciation for service excellence.

By blending internal talent, local expertise, and international experience, we have built a strong and dynamic leadership team. What unites this group is a shared commitment to our guests, genuine care for our associates, and a passion for delivering exceptional experiences.

How valuable is it for Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf to have such a strong suite product?

Our location at The Wharf, combined with sweeping views of the Potomac River and Haines Point, naturally creates a resort-like atmosphere in the heart of the city. This unique setting makes it especially important for us to offer accommodations that match the sense of space, comfort, and exclusivity that guests seek in such an environment. Having a strong suite product, comprising a significant portion of our overall inventory, allows us to cater to a wide and diverse range of travelers. For families, the availability of spacious suites and connecting options provides both comfort and flexibility. For couples, suites offer an opportunity to elevate their stay and celebrate meaningful milestones in a memorable setting.

Additionally, our suite offerings position us well to accommodate larger groups and corporate travelers. When hosting group business, it is common to welcome high-level executives or VIP guests who require more expansive and refined accommodations. Having a robust selection of suites ensures we can meet these expectations seamlessly, offering the appropriate level of comfort and privacy.

Ultimately, the breadth of our suite inventory has proven to be a significant advantage. It enhances our ability to deliver personalized, elevated experiences while attracting a broader mix of guests, all of whom are looking to enjoy the distinctive atmosphere that defines Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf.

How has Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf approached its restaurant/food and beverage offerings?

With The Wharf emerging as one of Washington, DC's most exciting new neighborhoods, the mile-long stretch along the Potomac River offers an impressive variety of entertainment. From lively bars and diverse restaurants to vibrant nightclubs, the area caters to every taste ranging from casual, quick dining to refined, high-end experiences. In such a dynamic environment, it was essential for us to create something truly distinctive.

At Pendry, we set out to offer venues that would stand apart while complementing the energy of The Wharf. Bar Pendry was designed as an intimate and sophisticated space, providing guests with a refined yet welcoming atmosphere, an ideal setting for both locals and visitors to gather and unwind. Meanwhile, Moonraker delivers a completely different experience. Positioned as a destination in its own right, it combines breathtaking waterfront views with elevated design and a vibrant social scene. Together, these venues reflect our commitment to offering unique concepts that enrich the neighborhood while creating memorable experiences for our guests.

Will you highlight Pendry Washington DC – The Wharf's focus on health and wellness?

Positioned along the waterfront, the hotel offers an experience that feels more like an urban resort than a traditional city property. With this in mind, we placed a strong emphasis on health and wellness across every aspect of the guest experience. Our spa retreat, featuring five treatment rooms and dedicated relaxation areas, provides a tranquil escape from the pace of the city, an ideal environment for guests to recharge and focus on their well-being. Complementing this, the pool offers a refreshing oasis, particularly during Washington's warm summer months. Whether guests are looking to unwind or swim laps to stay active, it serves as both a place of relaxation and fitness.

In addition, our fitness center, located on the second floor, is fully equipped with a wide range of strength-training equipment and cardio machines. Open 24 hours a day, it ensures that guests can maintain their wellness routines at any time, reinforcing our commitment to making health and fitness an integral part of the overall experience.

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

Luxury is a broad concept, and its meaning can vary greatly from person to person. For me, true luxury is about peace of mind, being completely worry-free and able to spend quality time with my family without concern. It's the feeling that everything is taken care of, allowing you to fully relax and enjoy the moment.

In a hotel setting, luxury is reflected in the consistency and quality of service delivered every day. Guests should never notice the complexity behind the scenes or the many individuals involved in creating their experience. Just as in a well-run kitchen, where multiple chefs may prepare the same dishes, the outcome must always be seamless and consistent. That reliability – paired with genuine care and attention to detail – is what truly defines a luxury experience.

What has made the hospitality industry so special for you?

One of the most rewarding aspects of a career in hospitality is the opportunity to travel across different countries and continents, gaining exposure to a wide range of cultures and perspectives. These experiences go far beyond professional growth; they shape your worldview and deepen your understanding of people.

Along the way, you build meaningful relationships with colleagues and friends from all over the world. What makes these connections truly special is the shared mindset: a genuine desire to care for others, to be present, and to create positive experiences. Hospitality, at its core, is about looking out for one another, anticipating needs, and embracing a spirit of generosity and service.

These global experiences and relationships not only enrich your career, but also stay with you for a lifetime.

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

Success in hospitality, as in life, is built on resilience and a willingness to learn from every moment and every situation. It's important to recognize that not everything will go perfectly from the start. There will be challenges, setbacks, and moments where we may "fall." What truly matters is the ability to get back up, reflect, and grow from those experiences. Each obstacle presents an opportunity to learn, to improve, and to become stronger. Over time, these moments shape not only your professional capabilities, but also your character. By embracing both the highs and the lows, you develop the strength and perspective needed to face each new day with confidence, adaptability, and a renewed commitment to excellence. ●



One bedroom suite