



Personalized Service



**An Interview with
Colby Brock, General Manager,
The Radisson Hotel New Rochelle**

*The Radisson Hotel New Rochelle lobby (above);
sumptuous guest room (left); and
large swimming pool (below)*

EDITORS' NOTE Colby Brock obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a double major in Psychology and English from the University of Hartford. She interned for the Radisson Hotel New Rochelle, along with other hotel properties, while attending college and began working there full-time in 1999 as a restaurant manager. In 2008, while continuing to manage the lounge at the Radisson, Brock pursued a degree in Interior Design from Parsons School of Design in Manhattan. She then joined Mojo Stumer Associates, an architectural design firm. One of the projects she worked on was the re-design of the Radisson's lobby. In 2011, Brock returned to the Radisson as the Food and Beverage Director and Interior Designer/Project Manager. For the past 16 years, she has been a strong supporter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and served on the Westchester/Hudson Valley Chapter as a member of the Board of Trustees.



Colby Brock

PROPERTY BRIEF Blending modern style with affordability and convenience to New York City attractions, The Radisson New Rochelle (radissonnewrochelle.com) is an excellent choice for stays in the Westchester/Bronx area. The hotel's beautifully appointed guest rooms are just minutes from I-95 and are within walking distance of Metro North and Amtrak rail stations. Thanks to free on-site parking, the Radisson is also ideal for commutes to Connecticut and both LaGuardia and JFK airports. Guests can spend a lazy afternoon surfing the Web with free Wi-Fi or lounging at the outdoor pool before taking the whole family to nearby Yankee Stadium for a baseball game or for a day at the local beaches. Called "deliriously good" by The New York Times, Mediterranean cuisine at NoMa Social restaurant will tempt guests to indulge every day of their stay. For a quiet night in, order room service directly to spacious, new accommodations, available with plush Sleep Number® beds on request. To enjoy sweeping views of Long Island Sound and savor a complimentary breakfast, book an Executive Business Class Suite.

Will you talk about what has made the property work so well?

My grandfather built our family company on the premise of "be good to your business and it will be good to you."

We built this property over 40 years ago and have owned and operated it ever since. It has always been our motto to follow in my grandfather's footsteps.

The owners of the property invest in it every single year. We just completed a \$5-million renovation including our entire HVAC & boiler system, making everything more eco-friendly, along with our guest rooms, guest bathrooms, and public spaces, all to move the building along with the times.

We are in a wonderful location in terms of proximity to Manhattan, Connecticut, and The Bronx, all the local airports, Yankee Stadium, the Bronx Zoo, and the major highways & railway hubs. Those things, in conjunction with providing our guests with a boutique-style experience rather than a cookie-cutter, chain-hotel feeling and providing personalized service is our secret.



Will you touch on the investment in the guest rooms as well as the suite component?

We feel the hospitality industry is moving towards a much more modern trend in accommodations to cater to millennials; everything is more sleek & simplified, featuring more technology available to the guests. The comforts of home without being at home exactly.

We have an older building but she still shines with all of the upgrades we have made. We did everything we possibly could to be more environmentally aware and to keep our property as current as one built today.

In regard to the food and beverage product and offering, many hoteliers talk about the challenge of the restaurant component. How much of a focus is that for you?

The challenge the industry faces in general is with the onset of all of the limited service and extended-stay products that "include" breakfast, sometimes even dinner and a glass of wine. The

guest perception is that they have more value but consumers aren't always educated. These things are "included" but as the old adage goes, nothing in life is free. Those items are built into the rate and are typically an inferior product food – and beverage-wise.

In a full-service property, the focus on food and beverage is tremendous. It's a wonderful amenity for a lot of business travelers, men and women, who don't really want to go to the grocery store and cook for themselves. They're away from home for one night enjoying the luxury of being catered to in a fabulous restaurant. Guests can be served, relax, and have a nice drink or tapas in our restaurant, NoMa Social, and that puts the travel and service experience ahead of an extended-stay or limited-service property. It's another opportunity to touch the guest.

For social gatherings, the same holds true. Having a full-service restaurant and bar, along with full-service staff throughout the property, is a huge benefit.

In general, the focus of a hotel restaurant needs to be on catering to the hotel guest but also on capturing the local community by offering something they can enjoy as well, a destination restaurant, if you will. We put a lot of focus on getting a top-notch chef to produce an excellent product reviewed by *The New York Times*, as well as receiving high ratings on opentable.com, restaurant.com, Zagat, etc.

NoMa Social, an acronym for North of Manhattan, has become more than a service to the hotel guest but also a great spot for our local community.

Will you talk about the investment in training your people? What has been the key to keeping the employees?

Our team represents our culture, which is that we need to take care of people, not only those who come to visit us, but also those who work here. Involving our staff in everything from our marketing plan to our "yes I can" attitude, which is a huge platform Radisson has, to getting them involved in the day-to-day operations, helps us to invest in each other. We listen to them, really listen. I always remember that I am just one person and the reality is that 98 sets of eyes are better than one. I implore the staff to tell me every day what they see, what they hear, and how we can do it better.

They know we value their feedback; we are a true team. In addition to the guest feedback, what the staff can offer in making us better today than we were yesterday is invaluable. ●