

## Inspiring Life's Greatest Stories

An Interview with Arnaud Zannier, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Zannier Hotels

**EDITORS' NOTE** Born in 1973 in Saint-Chamond, France, as the son of renowned French fashion entrepreneur, Roger Zannier, Arnaud Zannier started his career in the fashion industry as International Business Developer for Kickers in London. In 2001, he launched a luxury shoe company, n.d.c. made by hand, with shoes designed and crafted in Europe by artisans working in family ateliers, made with leathers selected from the finest tanneries



Arnaud Zannier

in Tuscany, England, and America. The brand was distributed in more than 350 of the world's finest boutiques, including n.d.c. stores in Brussels and Paris. In 2011, he took steps to realize a personal dream and entered the hospitality industry with Zannier Hotels. He bought Michelin-starred restaurant La Ferme de mon Père, from chef Marc Veyrat, and launched Zannier Hotels Le Chalet in Megève (France), the first boutique hotel of the group. Since then, he opened four more hotels: Zannier Hotels Phum Baitang, Cambodia; Zannier Hotels Omaanda, Namibia; Zannier Hotels Sonop, Namibia; Zannier Hotels Bâi San Hô, Vietnam; and the newest property, Ile de Bendor, is scheduled to open in 2026.

**COMPANY BRIEF** ZannierHotels (zannierhotels.com) creates one-of-a-kind stays and experiences, united by a desire to inspire Life's Greatest Stories. Its hotels celebrate the beauty of simplicity, the return to simple pleasures and appreciation of adventure, gastronomy and nature. Echoing the spirit of their surroundings, each new destination enraptures every sense, inviting guests to experience enriching exchanges with local traditions, cultures and communities. Today, Zannier Hotels is comprised of a collection of five hotels and eight private estates in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

**What was your vision for creating Zannier Hotels and how do you define the company's mission?**

Since my early days, thanks to my family and to my previous working experiences, I had the chance to take some wonderful trips around the world, but I felt a lack of authenticity and simplicity when traveling. Therefore, I decided

to join the hospitality industry and fulfill an old dream. It started with an opportunity to purchase the three-star Michelin restaurant, La Ferme de mon Père, in Megève, France, that we turned into Zannier Hotels Le Chalet. We added other hotels to the collection, and our group's vision can now be defined by: "Zannier Hotels aims to inspire life's greatest stories," and our mission: "each one-of-a-kind stay is curated to empower a meaningful and lifelong connection to the local culture and community in every place

we touch."

**Will you provide an overview of Zannier Hotels' properties and where you see the greatest opportunities for growth?**

Our collection is currently composed of five out-of-the-ordinary hotels in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Last year, we also launched Zannier Private Estates, now composed of eight properties, which are curated villas from Saint-Tropez

to Menorca including Portugal and Mauritius, offering remarkable homes for short-term and long-term rentals.

Our journey and desire to share unforgettable moments continues with three projects in Europe opening by 2026. We now aim to continue our progression favoring management contracts to grow the brand even further. With Zannier Hotels Bendor to be launched in spring 2026, we aim to build our European flagship property and increase our presence in Europe. In parallel, I still have in my mind the desire to expand to the States and Latin America in order to be present on every continent. Of course, we will pursue in parallel the development of the Nonna Bazaar concept (under a franchise model) and Zannier Private Estates. We are regularly approached by investors and we are discussing potential projects that we cannot yet reveal but might be announced soon. Between us, I hope to have the chance to open a city hotel in the next decade too.



Zannier Hotels Le Chalet nestled in the pristine white peaks of the Mont Blanc mountain range, surrounding Megève, France



*Khmer for “green village,” Zannier Hotels Phum Baitang near Siem Reap – the threshold to UNESCO World Heritage Site Angkor Wat*

Our current Zannier Hotels:

- At Zannier Hotels Le Chalet, the essence of purity and simplicity throughout the design and experience flows effortlessly into the pristine white peaks of the Mont Blanc mountain range, surrounding Megève. Interiors are pared back, and the atmosphere is unhurried.

- Khmer for “green village,” Zannier Hotels Phum Baitang is set within eight hectares (20 acres) of lush gardens and rice paddies near Siem Reap – the threshold to UNESCO World Heritage Site Angkor Wat. The 25 terrace villas and 20 pool villas capture the essence of traditional stilted Khmer homes.

- Zannier Hotels Omaanda is a 15-hut Owambo-style lodge, just half-an-hour from Windhoek, Namibia. Elevated views stretch across savannahs to the Khomas Hochland Plateau beyond. African antiques continue the cultural context of the rush-thatched round huts, each with their own sunken bathtub and panoramic terrace.

- The thrill of adventure is omnipresent at Zannier Hotels Sonop; a ten tented-suite lodge constructed on top of granite boulders in authentic 1920s British colonial style. Set within 5,600 hectares (13,800 acres) of untouched desert wilderness, the lodge captures the restorative essence of the surroundings. From the reception room to the partially walled bathroom with vintage bathtubs, and private terrace, all tents focus on the desert’s richness and awe-inspiring views with explorer-style antiques.

- Zannier Hotels Bãi San Hô is perched on a secluded peninsula of Phu Yen, uniting ancient rice paddy fields, verdant hilltops and a kilometer-long beach on 98 hectares (245 acres). The resort promotes an immersion into Vietnam’s rich culture. Three restaurants range from Bà Hai authentic regional cooking, fresh seafood at Làng Chài, to all-day Southeast-Asian casual dining at Nhà O.

**While Zannier Hotels has created one of-a-kind hotels around the world, are there common characteristics that tie the properties together?**

All our properties share a sense of the aesthetic, somehow very simple, often defined by timeless, authentic design with activities that allow excitement and discovery. A return to life’s simple pleasures in a sense. We look at every detail to create a pared back, unhurried atmosphere that will embrace this “emotion” I felt when I visited the place for the first time, and way of life beyond design,



*Zannier Hotels Omaanda is a 15-hut Owambo-style lodge just half-an-hour from Windhoek, Namibia*

promoting a sense of inner balance and harmony for our guests. We could summarize it by saying hotels with a philosophy of local authenticity, promoting elegant yet understated luxury.

**How have you approached food and beverage offerings at the properties and what are the keys to being successful in this part of the business?**

With interior design, bespoke experiences, and sustainability, gastronomy is the fourth essential pillar of our brand. In our eyes, you get to know a culture by living like locals, and food and beverage is part of this. Since the beginning, I wanted gastronomy to play an important role in our guests’ journey. This is why I asked my childhood friend, Julien Burlat, a former Michelin-awarded chef, to work with us and develop new F&B concepts. In every property, we work with fresh and local ingredients, basing our menus on local recipes. Here again, there is a deep respect for traditions. No matter their size, all our properties have at least a restaurant and a bar, also open to external guests, in order to share our vision of gastronomy: it should be simple, local and convivial. For us, a strong F&B offering is not only important, but essential, as it completes the overall guest experience. This is why it goes beyond breakfast, lunch or dinner. A little delicacy at the turndown, a small grab in the wellness center, a sweet surprise for special events, a nice refreshment in the car, or healthy snacks on the go are examples of sweet moments we value. While the recipes are undeniably important, the fit with the overall concept, interior decoration, presentation, and service is crucial to tell a complete story and create a memorable experience for our guests.



*Zannier Hotels Sonop, Namibia, a tented-suite lodge constructed on top of granite boulders in 1920s British colonial style*

**How important has it been to build the Zannier Hotels’ team, and will you highlight Zannier Hotels’ commitment and investment in its workforce?**

I am pretty lucky. Zannier Hotels has a very strong, dedicated, passionate and loyal team. For the industry, our turnover is pretty low. I see it as an illustration of the passion shared within all our properties. For me, finding the right personalities is key. More than an expertise, guests will remember a personality, a genuine smile. This is why I mainly work with professionals that I enjoy being with, and who share a similar vision of luxury hospitality. I like collaborating with people that I admire, and I believe in leading by example. We operate a diverse and inclusive company culture around the world, and we strive to be a great workplace, not only for working, but also for growing. This is why we put an emphasis on training – we offer cross-property rotations, and we provide free language lessons in our Asian resorts.

**How do you define a true luxury hospitality experience?**

A true luxury hospitality experience goes beyond a beautiful and comfortable accommodation for us; it involves creating a journey that one will remember, involving all senses. Today, the definitions and expectations of luxury are changing within travel. Travelers are looking for human-scale properties, with a sustainable approach and immersive experiences – exactly what comprises Zannier Hotels’ DNA. Making sure to offer a service that surpasses expectations, providing guests with a sense of exclusivity, personalization, and understanding of the local environment in a genuine and humble way – this is true luxury.

**Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own business?**

I think I always had this entrepreneurial spirit, maybe thanks to my father who is an entrepreneur himself, but the desire grew in

me even more when I first started to work in the fashion industry. I rapidly decided to launch my own business, starting with a luxury shoe company, n.d.c. made by hand, that I led for 18 years. I had to travel and explore places, restaurants and hotels. Because I noticed a lack of authenticity, I grew a desire to enter the hospitality industry and create Zannier Hotels to fit my vision. I am obsessed with the search for simplicity and timelessness in every project I work on. Some may describe me as inspiring or visionary, but I prefer to say that I am passionate. I like to start projects from a blank page and bring something new. I have consistently followed my own intuitions, prioritizing independence and authenticity.

**What advice do you offer to young people interested in pursuing a career in hospitality?**

Make sure you’re passionate about the environment that you will be evolving in. The passion for hospitality is contagious, but to last in this industry, you must find the right balance between adapting yourself and expressing your uniqueness. You are more than the product that you are representing, so make sure to have an environment of work that is aligned with your vision of travel, and deliver a service that can bring an emotion to guests.

**With all that Zannier Hotels has achieved, are you able to enjoy the process and take moments to reflect on what you have created?**

I am very much involved in the construction of our brand, working from the very beginning of a hotel until its completion, though I now mainly work on the design aspects. I am a workaholic, but I definitely do enjoy every day of this extraordinary journey. This is never repetitive, as we are working on very different projects in different places across the globe in a multicultural and ever-changing industry. I can never be bored of it. It is true that when you are too much into your daily figures, occupied with operational details of a current project, or even planning the next one, you might forget to step back. But speaking to others – whether they are guests, friends, family members, partners, or journalists like you – all those interactions help me realize the achievements of Zannier Hotels. Sometimes, it is hard to realize how far you have come or what you have already achieved until someone reminds you. I am incredibly grateful for the incredible encounters I’ve had over the past 12 years and for this hospitality journey that let me explore parts of the world – and of myself – I did not know. ●



*Zannier Hotels Băi San Hô is perched on a secluded peninsula of Phu Yen, Vietnam*