



## Peninsula's Timeless DNA

An Interview with Offer Nissenbaum,  
Managing Director, The Peninsula Beverly Hills Hotel



**EDITORS' NOTE** In 1986, Offer Nissenbaum joined the Doral Tuscany Hotel in New York and, two years later, he was transferred to Miami and promoted to General Manager of the Doral Saturnia International Spa Resort. Nissenbaum returned to New York in 1997 and joined The Plaza Hotel as Resident Manager. In 1999, he joined Omni Hotels and ultimately became Regional Vice President of Operations and the company's liaison to the Global Hotel Alliance before assuming his current role with Peninsula Hotels in December 2007. Nissenbaum currently serves on the Board of the Beverly Hills Chamber of Commerce and is a member of the Rotary Club of Beverly Hills. He graduated from Paul Smith's College in New York where he majored in hotel and restaurant management. Nissenbaum began his career with Helmsley Hotels in New York City.



Offer Nissenbaum

**PROPERTY BRIEF** Situated at one of Southern California's most desirable addresses, The Peninsula Beverly Hills offers the feel of an exclusive private residence built in classic Renaissance style. Guests can choose from 196 elegant rooms and suites and 16 comfortable detached Garden Villa Suites. The Peninsula Beverly Hills is a member of The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited ([www.hshgroup.com](http://www.hshgroup.com)) portfolio, a holding company incorporated in 1866 whose subsidiaries are engaged in the ownership and management of prestigious hotel, commercial, and residential properties in key Asia and U.S. destinations.

**During the global economic crisis, how much of an impact did you see on The Peninsula Beverly Hills and do you see signs of recovery in the market?**

Although we were not, and are not, immune to the downturn in the economy, we have seen a relatively low negative impact on overall business levels. Certainly, we have experienced less impact than our competitors in the marketplace. The Peninsula brand name, which has global awareness for international travel, along with the continued high demand for our suite product, resulted in our not having to reduce our suite rates. So this has shielded us from erosion of our average rate. We are definitely seeing signs of recovery as reflected in

improvement year over year in overall occupancy and average rate.

**Rates have been severely pressured during this challenging time. How do you maintain rate integrity while having a strong occupancy?**

We are strong believers that reducing rate does not foster demand. Instead, we approached this volatile economic period as an opportunity to increase value for our guests, including via spa services, breakfast, airport transfers, and other amenities that heighten their sense of value in staying at our hotel.

**Your owners continue to make investments in the property. Would you highlight some of the projects that guests can expect in the coming years?**

We are well on our way to a full-on guest room and suite enhancements, which will be completed in May 2011. This will include all new soft goods and case goods, and upgraded technology in all of our accommodations. The focus of this program is to completely renew our room product while preserving Peninsula's timeless DNA, our greatest equity. We have carefully planned the entire enhancement process to avoid any disturbance or inconvenience to our guests.

**In a competitive market like Beverly Hills, how are you able to differentiate the property and to show what makes The Peninsula Beverly Hills unique?**

We continually strive to create new guest experiences that "wow" through innovation in service. Simply focusing on physical properties in the luxury category is not enough to differentiate and create loyalty. Conversely, we place a merciless focus on service, which means our hotel transcends our competitors.

**The Peninsula Beverly Hills offers a wide range of accommodations and has a selection of wonderful suites. Would you provide an overview of your suite product?**

We have a total of 36 suites representing a wide variety of configurations, sizes, and amenities. Our Villa Suites, which are nestled in our gardens and just steps from the main hotel, provide a unique residential experience, privacy, and intimacy. They also have hardwood floors and fireplaces, some with full kitchens and Jacuzzi. In our main building, there are an array of suites that include three Presidential Suites, each with its own distinctive personality in terms of style, atmosphere, and size, as

well as California Suites, Superior Suites, and Deluxe Suites.

**Beverly Hills has many great stand-alone restaurants. However, you have been very successful with The Belvedere and your other food and beverage offerings. What has enabled you to be so successful in this area?**

The Belvedere is the only AAA Five Diamond restaurant in Los Angeles and Beverly Hills. We have focused on creating a fine-dining experience built around the creative preparation of comfort cuisine, using fresh, locally grown produce and ingredients. Chef James Overbaugh continually evolves his menu based on seasonality and availability of product. He also maintains a special rooftop garden for growing his own herbs and edible flowers.

**Guests expect luxury hotels today to have a full service, quality spa offering. Peninsula Hotels has been an innovator in the industry in providing the spa experience. How critical is this area for you and would you provide an overview of your spa facilities?**

While we have historically operated our spa in the context of luxurious indulgence, in the past year, we have shifted our focus to include wellness-oriented and de-stressing spa services. We are constantly developing new treatments for mind and body that are highly personalized to guest needs and preferences. Our spa is not large with only six treatment rooms, a spa cabana at our rooftop pool, and private manicure/pedicure stations, so we can truly customize every spa experience to each guest – one in which he or she feels nurtured and cared for, while receiving the highest quality treatment.

**As you look to 2011, what key priorities are you focused on for the property to retain its leadership position in the industry?**

Our highest priority is to see through the seamless execution of our guest room enhancements, as well as the celebration throughout 2011 of The Peninsula Beverly Hills' 20th anniversary. This occasion will be marked with special promotions for our loyal guests and new customers; events for media, the local community, and clients; and celebrations with all of our associates who I credit for bringing us to this hallmark. ●

*Spa Relaxation Room (left); Fire Pit and Cabana on the Roof Garden (top center and top right); Villa 126 Living Area (bottom center); Patio Suite Outside (bottom right)*