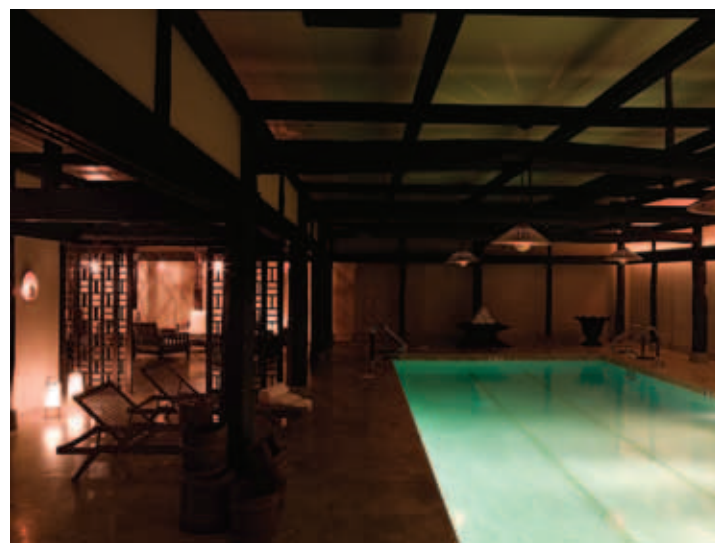


# Hospitality's Global Impact



## More Relaxed

An Interview with Philip L. Truelove,  
General Manager, The Greenwich Hotel



**EDITORS' NOTE** Born in Colombo, Sri Lanka, Philip Truelove began his career in reception at the Ritz Hotel in London in 1970. He later held managerial positions with the Connaught Hotel, The Ritz-Carlton in Washington, D.C., Chateau Marmont, and The Mercer Hotel. He also owns and operates The Island Inn in Monhegan, Maine. Truelove received his M.B.A. in Hotel Administration in the U.K.



**PROPERTY BRIEF** The Greenwich Hotel ([www.thegreenwichhotel.com](http://www.thegreenwichhotel.com)), located in New York's Tribeca district, has 88 rooms and suites with furnishings from handloomed, Tibetan silk rugs to English leather settees. All beds are Duxiana and bathrooms are designed in unique patterns of hand-laid Moroccan tile or Italian Carrara marble. Modern room features include high-definition flat-screen TVs, iPod docking stations, and complimentary wireless Internet. Hotel features include a drawing room and courtyard, Locanda Verde restaurant, Shibui Spa, as well as indoor pool and gym facilities. The Greenwich Hotel is a member of The Leading Hotels of the World.

### Are The Greenwich Hotel clientele from a niche market?

I don't think it's a niche market; it's a market for people who prefer to stay in a hotel that offers a more individual and relaxed style, which Tribeca is very well suited to.

The Hotel has been developed by Robert De Niro, who also co-founded the Tribeca Film Festival and has been involved with the revitalization of Tribeca since 9/11.

Over the past 10 to 12 years, many hotels have been established downtown. I was at The Mercer for eight years and, at the beginning, there was little here. The Greenwich is the first hotel that has been developed to this standard in this part of town. Along with the other hotels that have opened in lower Manhattan, a diverse group of individuals from various industries are now attracted to this part of the city.

**Many who might think downtown might envision trendy and hip, but may not expect the high level of service and quality you provide. Is it hard to get that message out?**

Trendy is an aspect associated more so with SoHo and the Lower East Side, but Tribeca is one of the most expensive areas in Manhattan

for residential real estate and there is a very sophisticated group of people who live here. Given our location, we naturally attract a clientele whose priority is the quality of service and attention to detail rather than a trendy atmosphere.

**In terms of how the property was developed, was there more of a focus on suites or regular rooms, and is there a different feel among the various accommodations?**

It was developed to cover a mix – you always need variety. Within that, they have all been designed to be comfortable and diverse in their style. Each room in the hotel has different fabrics, materials, and carpets. The tiles in the lobby are made by an Italian family



that has been making tiles for centuries, some of the mirrors you see are made from the original windows glass of the Flatiron building and throughout the building, all the corridor floors, the doors, and the paneling are made from recycled woods.

This building conjures memories and makes people comfortable.

**Can you talk about the food and beverage product and did you know it would create the type of excitement it has?**

One never knows – one hopes. Chef Andrew Carmellini is an experienced and professional chef, and the restaurant is geared toward our guests and the neighborhood. The neighbors are frequent visitors; in the long run, that makes a restaurant successful.

Our partners in the hotel are also partners in the restaurant – we are very much the same family.

**In this part of the city, how much did you need to offer in the fitness and spa area?**

There are so few hotels that offer a pool, spa, and gym that is geared only toward the hotel guest. It is a privilege to be able to offer such a private and peaceful area that so many of our guests do actually use.

It is a beautifully designed Japanese influenced space – the pool is surrounded by the framework of a Japanese farmhouse that is 250 years old. It provides a peaceful Zen-like atmosphere, which everybody appreciates.

**How do you balance technology today with the need for personal interaction with guests?**

I am reluctant to bring in technology that takes away personal contact. With only 88 rooms, we have sufficient staff to accommodate everybody immediately.

We all live with our various devices and recognize how necessary they are. High speed Internet access is an essential and not a luxury, which is why we do not charge for it.

**The general manager was once someone who was there to greet guests, but is it more of a business role today?**

It is important to maintain the financial health of the business, and technology has added another complicated aspect to life and I don't think any of us is now able to be an expert in all areas. I love this hotel because of its size and I, along with the staff, are able to get to know the guests on a more personal level.

**How critical has it been to have owners that invest in the property and who also share a vision with you?**

It's very important. All of the owners are personally interested in the hotel and in the people who come here. Ira Druker and Robert De Niro have built this hotel with such a passion that it is a privilege to be involved with its operation. ●

Lobby (top left); Pool (top right); Peaceful Bench in the Courtyard (center)