

Hospitality

History, Glamour, and Allure

An Interview with Edward A. Mady,
Regional Director of West Coast USA, Dorchester Collection
and General Manager, The Beverly Hills Hotel



The Beverly Hills Hotel red carpet entrance

EDITORS' NOTE Edward Mady is Dorchester Collection's West Coast regional director U.S., overseeing The Beverly Hills Hotel and Hotel Bel-Air. He is also General Manager of The Beverly Hills Hotel and has worked for Dorchester Collection since June 2009. Prior to this, he spent two decades with The Ritz-Carlton, most prominently as Vice President and Area General Manager, overseeing five hotels. In 2011, he won the Food and Beverage Association's 'Hospitality Professional of the Year' award. Mady graduated with honors from Saint Clair College in his native Windsor, Ontario.



Edward A. Mady

PROPERTY BRIEF The Beverly Hills Hotel and Bungalows was built in 1912 and is situated among 12 landscaped acres. The property features 210 guest rooms, suites, and private bungalows, and the celebrity favorite, The Polo Lounge. Long known as "The Pink Palace," the hotel (www.thebeverlyhillshotel.com) is a member of the Dorchester Collection.

Would you provide an overview of The Beverly Hills Hotel and the history of the property?

The Beverly Hills Hotel opened prior to the founding of the city of Beverly Hills itself, and the city grew up around the community. Today, the hotel remains at the heart of Beverly Hills and is home to Hollywood royalty and travelers from around the world. You would be hard-pressed to find another hotel in the world that matches this one when it comes to history, glamour, and allure. Our sister property, Hotel Bel-Air, which I oversee as well, also enjoys 67 years of heritage as one of Los Angeles' most coveted canyon getaways for the rich and famous. Together, our combined presence in the market gives us unique positioning as iconic hotels.

As part of Dorchester Collection, the hotel also has a clear commitment to luxury. Through our internal culture and philosophy of "We Care," we have valuable insight into the fact that service always lies at the core of hotel luxury. It is through great service that you are able to turn moments into memories. Since memories have no expiration date, what we are creating is a simple and timeless gift for our guests.

How do you keep The Beverly Hills Hotel current and modern while preserving the tradition and history of the property?

In many ways, our future will always be about our past. Because of our heritage and history, what we do better than most is bridge generations, and we are very focused on being sure that we resonate among all ages. Even very young guests have an insatiable desire to learn about our legacy and association with the entertainment industry. We are lucky, as there is probably

no property in the world that can claim such a legacy as a differentiator. That said, we've carefully built upon this foundation by being innovative, introducing mindful design updates through our current restoration program, and utilizing very fun and engaging social media strategies. From contest promotions to photo contests to our weekly "Tips from the Top" posts, we strive to maintain a timeless appeal among guests who may have never heard of the Oscar winners of yesteryear.

How broad is the target market for The Beverly Hills Hotel, and how do you define your clientele?

Although The Beverly Hills Hotel is often called Hollywood's living room, our market is broader than you might think. While we are certainly a home to contemporary celebrities and heads of state, many of our guests are business travelers or leisure visitors who drive in from Southern California. Vacation travelers and local catering groups are also important parts of our mix, with strong representation from the weddings and social market. When you're in the lobby, you might be standing next to a billionaire in flip-flops or someone who can't wait to ditch his briefcase and just head to the pool for a beer. It is also nice to see multiple generations of celebrities here at the hotel. This helps to validate our strategy of delivering relevant luxury and experiences.

The Beverly Hills Hotel has a strong suite offering and a wide range of accommodations. Would you highlight your suites and bungalows, and how they help differentiate the property?

At The Beverly Hills Hotel, our bungalow product is unique for a city location, with each bungalow having its own Hollywood history. The bungalows provide a residential feeling

where you can be located in the heart of it all yet surrounded by gardens and walkways, which provide romance and privacy. They were good enough for frequent guests like Elizabeth Taylor, Marilyn Monroe, and Howard Hughes, and they remain good enough for today's most popular celebrities and luminaries. As for our suites, they are coveted for their prestige but also as private gathering locations. Both here and at Hotel Bel-Air, they are used for everything from power breakfasts to sensitive contract negotiations and confidential meetings.

What makes your food and beverage offering work so well, and how important is it to attract the local community to your venues?

The Polo Lounge, recently referred to as the "epicenter of power dining in Los Angeles," is also called "Hollywood's commissary." This restaurant has become a brand within itself and one of several brands that is inherent in the architecture of both The Beverly Hills Hotel and Hotel Bel-Air. For the past 72 years, our Polo Lounge has had its own distinct character, its own set of loyal customers from the community, and a local popularity and following rarely seen among hotel restaurants. We have never swayed from what our success has been built upon, which is serving great American cuisine in a setting without pretense. Pure and simple, it is a fun place to be, no matter who you are, as are our other two popular dining venues, the beloved Fountain Coffee Shop and the newly redesigned Cabana Café.

What do you look for when hiring talent? Is it more important to have the education and knowledge or do you focus on personality and culture fit?

We look for people with an inherent desire to delight, because this is how we can put the guest first and create a customer-centric culture. Character, talent, and culture fit are key, in that order. This also requires a leadership approach that creates a workplace of transparency, trust, openness, engagement, and human kindness. My role has also allowed me to be a mentor throughout my career. In this role, I am tasked with creating a culture that enables team members to be successful in their positions. Hopefully, this gives them peace of mind and makes them feel safe when performing their jobs in the workplace. This in turn impacts our guests and makes their experience the best it can be. ●