

Hospitality

London's Quintessentially English Hotel



The terrace and gardens (left); horse and carriage at the entrance to The Goring (above)

An Interview with
David Morgan-Hewitt, Managing Director, The Goring

EDITORS' NOTE David Morgan-Hewitt studied History at Durham before commencing his career in restaurants and being first employed at The Goring as Restaurant Manager 20 years ago. He was later promoted to the role of Food and Beverage Manager before being made Deputy General Manager in 1993. He became General Manager in 2000 before taking on the role of Managing Director in 2006.



David Morgan-Hewitt

PROPERTY BRIEF The Goring (thegoring.com) was opened by Otto Goring in 1910. In its second century, it is now the only five-star luxury hotel in London that is owned and run by the family that built it. Deep in the heart of Belgravia, just behind Buckingham Palace, The Goring is within strolling distance of the Royal Parks and the best shops, theaters, and galleries in town. In January 2013, The Goring was granted a Royal Warrant of appointment to HM The Queen for Hospitality Services. The Goring is a member of Relais & Châteaux.

How would you highlight the history and heritage of The Goring and how it has evolved over the years?

Otto Goring opened the hotel in 1910. Having passed through four generations, the hotel is run by Jeremy Goring, Otto's great grandson, and endures as the last family-owned luxury hotel in London. The Goring was the first hotel in the world with central heating and a bathroom in every room, the only London hotel to be a member of the prestigious Relais & Châteaux, and the first to receive a Royal Warrant from her Majesty The Queen. These attributes speak of the hotel's attentive service, its character and charisma and, above all, the family's passion for quality. Each generation served as a loving custodian, providing comfort, good food, and a warm welcome.

Would you highlight some of the projects that guests can expect in the coming years?

Over the past few years, we have commissioned four giants of the English interiors scene to embellish the hotel that Jeremy Goring's great-great-grandfather opened in 1910; David Linley, Tim Gosling, Nina Campbell, and Russell Sage have worked their magic in the restaurant; the ground floor lounge and bar; and the bedrooms

and suites. The culmination of this designer transformation will be revealed in March 2015, just in time for the hotel's 105th birthday. We have deliberately used different designers, but their spaces all work together brilliantly, and include proper interiors that contribute to our ongoing history.

What makes the property so special and helps it perform so strongly year after year?

Because The Goring has only been run by four members of the same family, it has the air of a private home rather than a hotel – this helps it stand apart from its competitors. The exceptional level of service we offer our guests also sets us apart as a leader in the market. Another unique selling point is the decor and the property itself. All of the interiors tell a story, chapter by chapter, each generation having contributed to them. The Goring is luxurious, but also familiar; it exudes Englishness, a sense of place, and true character.

Would you provide an overview of your suites?

Our suites, like the rest of our rooms, are individually decorated and showcase excellent British craftsmanship in a time-honored style that seamlessly flows with the most up-to-date technology. Guests enjoy true indulgence in our Belgravia suites, which are quintessentially English in style and full of old-world charm with marble fireplaces and fabulous antiques.

The jewel is the two-bedroom Royal Suite, which Jeremy Goring commissioned to make the hotel's centenary. Former fashion designer and interiors specialist Russell Sage created the feel of a London apartment. Running the length of the hotel with a balcony overlooking The Goring Gardens, the suite oozes craftsmanship from special paint finished to the finest hand-woven Gainsborough silks and royal artifacts, including a life-size portrait of Her Majesty Queen Victoria in the master bath shower, protected by aircraft glass. Beneath our five-star exterior is a serious streak of fun. Classic British eccentricity pervades from an "Ooh!" light setting in bedrooms to fluffy sheep footstools. This is what guests can experience now and in the future – enduring style, quality, and attentive service.

How challenging is the food & beverage part of the business and how important is it to bring the local community into the restaurant?

The Dining Room is a staple part of the Belgravia neighborhood and has a strong local contingency. Executive Chef Shay is one of England's new generation of incredibly exciting young chefs with a Michelin pedigree and the Hotel Chef of the Year award already under his belt. We are very excited about this new chapter in The Dining Room, which will remain an example of the traditional brilliance of British food while becoming more refined. But we will never forget our essential DNA – that we are a beacon of proper British food, which is why The Dining Room remains so successful as a standalone restaurant in the competitive market. The restaurant is ambitious and serves modern British food with personality – as befits The Goring – but food that is rooted in sensibility.

How are you able to provide such consistent service for the guest and how do you measure your service?

The Goring is famous for its superb service, which is personal but never intrusive and it goes without saying that we ensure the closest attention to detail, which is why we have been welcoming multiple generations of repeat guests since the hotel first opened its doors. We cherish our guests, anticipate what they want, and deliver it consistently and this is reflected in the number of guests returning, which stands at 63 percent.

As you look to 2015, what are the key priorities that you are focused on for the property in order to make sure that you retain your leadership position in the industry?

The past five years have been dedicated to a full renovation of this wonderful old property. The very latest technology has been combined with the most luxurious of silks and veneers. Each room is individually designed with bespoke furnishings and exquisite fabrics. We have an absolutely magnificent hotel. The focus for 2015 is to once again raise the standards of care, attention, and service that we can deliver to our guests. We never stand still and we intend to lead rather than follow the hotel scene in London.

We believe that our future clients will demand even higher standards from the hotels they chose to stay in. They will want properties that reflect their city or location, and celebrate the history and culture of their neighborhoods. The Goring celebrates the very best of England. It is essentially London's quintessentially English hotel. ●