



Trump-Level Service



An Interview with Suzie Mills,
General Manager, Trump International Hotel & Tower New York

The spa (left); a suite living area
with views of Central Park (above)

EDITORS' NOTE Suzie Mills has served on the management team of the award-winning Trump International Hotel & Tower New York since pre-opening in 1996. Mills was promoted to General Manager in 2006, becoming the youngest GM in New York City. Beginning her hospitality career working at her parents' hotel in Wales at the age of 10, she has been honored as one of Crain's New York's prestigious "40 Under 40" and earned her property the AAA Five Diamond Award and the Forbes Travel Guide Five Star Award.



Suzie Mills

PROPERTY BRIEF The premiere property of the Trump Hotel Collection, the iconic Trump International Hotel & Tower New York (trumphotelcollection.com/central-park) is the only Forbes Five Star and AAA Five Diamond hotel with a Five-Star, Five-Diamond (and also Michelin Three-Star and New York Times Four-Star) Restaurant, Jean-Georges. Steps from the Time Warner Center and Lincoln Center, the 52-story structure has 176 luxurious guest rooms and suites, complete with European-style kitchens, marble bathrooms, and exceptional views of Central Park and the Manhattan skyline.

How do you describe Trump International Hotel & Tower New York?

We love our guests to feel as if they have entered their home-away-from-home when they stay with us. Yes, we're a hotel, but our lobby for example is petite and intimate. This offers guests an experience that immediately resonates with a residential one, whether they are walking into the hotel or residence side.

The service standards are similar in both products?

Yes, exactly the same. On the residential side, you can expect to pay for the housekeeping service that comes standard with our hotel stays, but residents have all the same services that we offer to hotel guests: housekeeping, room service, facility use of both the health club and spa. We also have 24-hour doormen, concierge, and runners available on the residential side just as we do on the hotel side.

Many people appreciate that style of living. You feel like you're in a hotel as you're receiving all of the five-star services, but it's actually your home.

Is there a link among the properties as the Trump Hotel Collection continues to grow?

Service is absolutely our main link: our Attaché guest service team is incredible – they can make just about anything happen, from private shopping experiences to obtaining tickets for sold-out shows to same night dinner reservations at the hot, new restaurants that require a one month out call. Along with our standard level of exceptional service provided by all hotel staff, it's this extraordinary level of service that pulls the brand together. Additionally, each hotel building itself is an iconic landmark, and each are set in amazing locations, affording some of the

very best city views. Our Collection's guest rooms tend to be extremely spacious, and there are floor-to-ceiling windows in all hotels.

Are you happy with the product today or are there renovations that guests can expect in the future?

Perhaps one of the most important parts of my job is staying on top of the product – we're competing with some of the best hotels in the world, right on our doorstep (literally). Ultimately, it all comes back to service as this is what defines you as a hotel. We can all have a beautiful product but service is what brings guests back; it makes them feel welcomed and that we appreciate their business.

It's also important to stay on top of technology, which is ever-changing. We have to make sure we have all of the conveniences for guests who often spend more time traveling than they spend in their own homes. We are committed to ensuring that all is convenient for guests during their stay: powers outlets are well-located and a variety of device chargers are available. Guests also like to have the ability to stream their iPad content to the television. These are items that we're continually working on.

As far as soft goods, we're constantly making updates here and there. While we don't have a full-on renovation planned at the moment, we're often refreshing our product and keeping it well maintained, changing carpets in the rooms for example, and we perform a very detailed preventive maintenance program, which is key in keeping our rooms in tip-top shape.

Is there a consistent feel within the suite product?

We're slightly different from many other properties. I only have 30 standard rooms; everything else is one- or two-bedroom suites. They're all spacious, but our key differentiator is that all of our

suites have full kitchens. Our frequent travelers love those kitchens. They might not do full-fledged cooking in them but they like the convenience of being able to make coffee when they want, or have a quick breakfast or a snack. If they're traveling with kids, they have goodies in the refrigerator – that's a service we provide: we will stock your fridge prior to your arrival, and having Whole Foods across the street makes this a very convenient service to offer. We're always striving to be three steps ahead of our guests. We don't like to leave them wanting for anything.

How do you address the wellness issues for your guests?

We encourage our guests to continue whatever routine they have at home on the road when staying with us (as long as they want to). We all travel and we know it can be challenging. When you're entertaining or staying at a hotel, you end up eating from the room service menu, which perhaps doesn't have the options you would typically have at home.

It's important to have our guests feel they can carry on their same routine. For example, we offer gluten-free products because many people these days avoid this specific protein in their diet. You need to have fresh, healthy items on the menu, but also quick menu items because people are often in a rush or between meetings, and they don't have the ability to wait 45 minutes for a room service meal.

Mainly, we don't want our guests to worry that they have to go off their diets while staying with us – it all ties back to encouraging that home-away-from-home feel.

In an industry where so many times that chef/hotel relationship is challenging, why has it worked so well with Jean-Georges?

A lot of it has to do with the personality of Jean-Georges, who is an absolute delight to deal with. He had years of experience in hotels before he went out on his own, so he understands the hotel component. This is critical as chefs who haven't worked in a hotel environment may not fully understand the pressures and the requests of the guests.

We keep a constant open line of communication – when there is an issue, we sit down together and easily resolve it. This is his three Michelin-star restaurant namesake. He is here six days a week and he's always accessible, which isn't the case for many other relationships. It's the daily contact we have and the constant communication that allows us to work together so well. ●