



A Tailored Experience

An Interview with Philip A. Wood,
Managing Director, The Jefferson, Washington, DC,
and Kathryn Sargent, Savile Row Tailor



The Jefferson Suite Day Study (left) and Parlor (above);
The Jefferson, Washington, DC entrance (below)

EDITORS' NOTE Over the course of his career, Philip Wood has been responsible for four hotels and four restaurants that reached five-star or five-diamond status. An elite handful of hotels have achieved number-one rankings under his leadership. The Jefferson, Washington, DC has the distinction of being Washington, DC's most awarded hotel in 2014 and 2015, in addition to the city's only hotel with 'Legend' status from Preferred Hotels & Resorts. Wood has held senior management positions with exalted institutions like Four Seasons Hotels, Jack Nicklaus' Golden Bear International, Rosewood Hotels, Orient-Express Hotels, and Forte's Exclusive Hotels of the World. He was President and shareholder in The Garrett Hotel Group. In 2007, Wood and two partners created Arden Grove Hospitality, a luxury hotel and resort management company. In 2011, Wood became a consultant to The Jefferson, which led to his joining the parent company in January 2012 and assuming his current post.

Kathryn Sargent's career, before launching her own house, included 15 memorable years at Gieves and Hawkes (Number 1 Savile Row), where she was appointed Head Cutter in 2009, the first woman in the history of Savile Row to hold this position.

COMPANY BRIEF As Washington, DC's most celebrated small boutique hotel, The Jefferson (jeffersondc.com) has presided over the corner of 16th and M Streets since 1923, when the Beaux-Arts gem opened as an apartment building and later as a hotel for the world's elite travelers and DC's most important visitors. The 95-room downtown property is European and Washingtonian in style, and tributes to Thomas Jefferson and his beloved Monticello are found throughout. The Jefferson boasts three exquisite dining options including Plume, the only Forbes five star-rated restaurant in Washington, DC; an intimate petite spa dedicated to customized treatments; and amenities including complimentary Wi-Fi and calls worldwide, bottled water, 24-hour in-room dining, an on-site fitness center, and small intimate meeting spaces including the Book Room, a private resident's lounge with fireplace.

Located at No. 6 Brook Street in the heart of London's Mayfair, the historic home of British tailoring is a modern tailoring house with traditional Savile Row values at its core. Inspired by an appreciation for true bespoke craftsmanship and luxury customer service, Kathryn Sargent (kathrynsargent.com) offers a traditional yet new tailoring home for both men and women.



Philip A. Wood



Kathryn Sargent

The Jefferson Hotel is a property that leads year after year. What consistently makes the property so special?

Wood: We are focused on who we are and not what everybody else is. It's all about personality and personalization. We spend an inordinate amount of time trying to get information about our guests before they are here. Once they're here, they become repeats. We have a very high repeat guest factor – somewhere in the 50 to 55 percent range – which is very high for a corporate destination with an average stay of two nights.

We encourage our staff to be themselves and let them take ownership of their guest service. One of the top travelers in New York, Valerie Wilson of Valerie Wilson Travel, describes us as a "grand and gracious urban estate", which is a very nice way of putting it. In the end, it's about the individuality and personality, and we let people shine in their own right.

It seems the next evolution of luxury is that personalization and customization. Is that the differentiator?



Wood: It's also understanding the individual customer needs. We live in a very high-tech world and we can offer all of those services, but we take great pride in assessing what our customer's needs are. There are road warriors who just want their room keys and to know where the bar is. Others may have specific needs, be they dietary, or a room in the rear of the hotel where it's quiet.

Kathryn, you have been a leader in bespoke tailoring, where women haven't always led. How did you get into it and do you see opportunities today for women to lead in that area?

Sargent: Absolutely. I believe women will play a much larger role in shaping the future of Savile Row. I was drawn into bespoke tailoring and to Savile Row because of the craftsmanship that is embedded in it. I believe that a great bespoke suit can really change how clients look and feel, ultimately helping them become more confident leaders.

I was a young 20-year-old fashion graduate when I first arrived at Number 1 Savile Row. I spent 15 years working there before becoming the first female Head Cutter in the history of Savile Row, which for me is a true honor. The most important things for me have always been creating quality luxury garments and providing amazing customer service. A Savile Row suit is unique to Savile Row; it isn't just the suit that counts but the total experience of having something designed and crafted by hand just for you.

On the surface, one might not equate a hotel experience with bespoke clothing but is there actually synergy there?

Sargent: Yes. At the core of both lies personalized service. Great tailoring houses and great hotels, such as The Jefferson, have to cater to a very discerning clientele. We both have to provide a stylish experience with a real focus on personalization. In bespoke tailoring, we start with the cloth and a client's pattern, and then we tailor it for their lifestyle and needs. Hotels, like The Jefferson, have to offer a similar approach; guests like stylish accommodation mixed with personalized service – the synergies are interesting.

Philip, what was the concept around The Tailored weekend at The Jefferson?

Wood: It pays homage to the most prestigious bespoke tailors. I attended an event at The British Embassy in Washington where there were 15 tailors exhibiting historic and more current suits, each piece being truly unique. It was a fascinating, informative, and extremely well-received exhibition. From there, we met Kathryn, the first female "cutter" on Savile Row, and our unique collaboration unfolded. ●