

# Hospitality



## The Time in Times Square



An Interview with  
**Kanvar Singh, General Manager, The Time New York**

A king guest room (left); The Time New York lounge (above)

**EDITORS' NOTE** Kanvar Singh began his career with The Dream Hotel Group as a Front Desk Agent at The Time New York in 2002. He quickly rose to become one of the youngest GMs in the city at the Night Hotel in 2008. Under his leadership, The Night was voted "the sexiest hotel in America" by TripAdvisor and won service awards from Booking.com, TripAdvisor, and Agoda. He then returned to The Time as General Manager in 2010, managing both The Time and Night properties for over a year. Currently, his focus has been on The Time New York, overseeing a multimillion-dollar renovation by the Rockwell Group, which was completed in December 2015. Singh is a graduate of Baruch College and of the General Managers Program from the Cornell School of Hotel Administration.



Kanvar Singh

**PROPERTY BRIEF** The Time New York ([thetimeny.com](http://thetimeny.com)) is a true urban sanctuary, situated just steps from Times Square, two blocks from Rockefeller Center, and within minutes of any Broadway show. The Time recently finished a major renovation, spearheaded by the much-lauded Rockwell Group. It has repositioned itself as a luxury lifestyle offering and will be the flagship property for the new Time brand from Dream Hotel Group.

**Would you provide an overview of what the renovation at The Time New York encompasses?**

We've changed the property entirely, from plumbing and flooring to furniture and fixtures. Our lobby is brand new, as well as all of our food and beverage outlets. Serafina remains our restaurant, but it has been completely reimagined. It feels much sleeker and more modern. We have also opened a new lounge on the second floor called LeGrande. David Rockwell designed the entire property, which is a point of pride for us.

**Would you talk about the investment in the penthouse and breakdown between suites and rooms?**

We have 25 suites, which is a high number for a 193-room property. They were conceived by the Rockwell Group to be a serene respite from the bustle of Times Square.

The rooms are done in minimalist fashion, but use high-design elements, like chairs from

Moroso, Siberian white oak flooring, and Smart TVs hidden behind the bedroom mirror. We're also using Frette linens, as well as Maison Margiela bath amenities and bathrobes in all of our rooms.

In our suites, we have a chic, yet comfortable living area, which has an ergonomically designed pull-out sofa bed for extra guests. Our Penthouse is an impressive triplex space with its own dining area, wraparound terraces, master bedroom with personal sauna, and truly stunning views of New York City.

**Would you talk about the service standards within the hotel and the quality of people you have brought in to uphold those standards?**

I received great support and guidance from Jay Stein, our CEO, and Rabinder Singh, our CFO, giving me the freedom to recruit managers from high-end luxury properties with a set focus on service. At the beginning of the renovation, we hired a new Director of Front Office who was tasked with raising the level of service at the hotel. She and I spent a lot of time finding the right people who fit with our concept, and added value to the hospitality we were looking to provide. We've created a Guest Relations Department whose sole job is to provide personalized hospitality to our guests. They reach out to our guests before their visit, greet them personally upon arrival, and continue to follow up with them throughout their stay and even after their departure.

In addition, I recruited an experienced Digital Media Manager, which I believe is essential. She works to make sure that we are robustly marketing ourselves in the digital realm and increasing the quality of our service throughout new media platforms.

Our goal has always been to provide individualized hospitality for all of our guests. After our renovations were completed in December, with the hires, the training, and the changes that were made, we have ranked the highest amongst our new comp set in service, as well as jettisoned our TripAdvisor score down 80 rankings in two months. Our goal is to become one of the highest ranked New York hotels on TripAdvisor. With the foundation we have created, the team and I are confident that we will.

**How much of a focus has technology been for you?**

Technology has been a huge focus for me – finding ways that we can enhance our guests' stays through technology is paramount to staying competitive in the market. What I've found is that there are two types of guests – those that truly embrace new technology and those who would prefer communicating in a more traditional way. We provide options for both types of guest. Our guests don't have to check-in on their phones, or order room service on their phones, but they certainly can.

All of our rooms and facilities have the most up-to-date technology – from our fitness center, to our conference rooms to the Samsung smart TVs in each guest room. We want to give our more tech savvy guests the technology that they are accustomed to and maybe even surprise them with something they've never seen before. For those guests that prefer more face-to-face communication, we want to make sure that our team is always there to provide that extra personal touch.

We've also moved to a paperless, mobile check-in process at the hotel. Our reception team uses iPads to check our guests in, swiping their credit cards and making them room keys wherever is most convenient for that particular guest. All of our guests – no matter their technology preference – love that personalized service.

**How did you get into the hospitality business?**

Honestly, I got into hospitality because I really admire Mr. Chatwal, the owner of the Dream Hotel Group. While I was still in college, I started working in his hotels as a management trainee. Once one gets into hospitality, he or she either loves it or hates it. I have a lot of passion for it, and I love going to work. I could not be doing anything better than this. It's such a part of me. Work doesn't feel like work.

**After the renovation, will you pause and enjoy what has been achieved?**

We've had many moments of celebration with the guests and the staff, who appreciate how much has been done. But as an hotelier, I want everything to be 100 percent all the time. The work is never done. It's our job now to share our vision of The Time with the rest of the world and make sure that the standards we have worked so hard to create are maintained.

Whatever is possible and needs to be done, we will invest in it, to make sure every guest's stay is 100 percent satisfactory. ●