

Hospitality Unlimited Opportunity

An Interview with
**Dianna Vaughan, Senior Vice President and Global Head,
DoubleTree by Hilton and Curio - A Collection by Hilton, and
Alexandra Jaritz, Global Head, Tru by Hilton at Hilton Worldwide**



Madison Beach Hotel, Curio Collection by Hilton, in Madison, Connecticut

EDITORS' NOTE A 20-year hospitality veteran, Dianna Vaughan has held several leadership positions at Hilton Worldwide: she's served as a General Manager and Director of Sales, led the global brand performance support team for both Hilton Hotels & Resorts and Embassy Suites by Hilton, and served as Vice President of Marketing for the Hilton Worldwide portfolio of brands, in addition to being the architect behind the Global Customer Marketing Promotions team at the company. Recently, she did a tour inside Human Resources, where she worked with the HR consulting and Team Member engagement teams heading up the Hilton Worldwide global culture initiatives including overseeing the diversity and inclusion team.

Prior to joining Hilton Worldwide, Alexandra Jaritz held key executive positions with Choice Hotels International, serving most recently as a Corporate Officer and Senior Vice President of Brand Strategy and Marketing. Additionally, Jaritz brings a unique financial perspective to Tru by Hilton, having worked as a Real Estate Consultant at Ernst & Young, LLP in the Hospitality Services Group and a Financial Analyst in the Investment Banking Division at Lehman Brothers Inc. She received her Bachelor of Science degree in Hotel Administration from Cornell University and received a Master of Business Administration degree from Duke's Fuqua School of Business.

COMPANY BRIEF Hilton Worldwide (hiltonworldwide.com) is a leading global hospitality company, spanning the lodging sector from luxurious full-service hotels and resorts to extended-stay suites and mid-priced hotels. For nearly 100 years, Hilton Worldwide has offered business and leisure travelers the finest in accommodations, service, amenities, and value. The company's 13 brands are comprised of more than 4,700 hotels and time-share properties, with over 775,000 rooms in 104 countries and include luxury brands, Waldorf Astoria Hotels & Resorts and Conrad Hotels & Resorts; lifestyle brand, Canopy by Hilton; full-service hotel brands, Hilton Hotels & Resorts, Curio - A Collection by Hilton and DoubleTree by Hilton; focused-service hotel brands, Hilton Garden Inn, Hampton by Hilton, and Tru by Hilton; all suites brands, Embassy Suites by Hilton, Homewood Suites by Hilton and Home2 Suites by Hilton; and vacation ownership brand, Hilton Grand Vacations (HGV). It has more than 55 million members in its award-winning customer loyalty program, Hilton HHonors.



Dianna Vaughan



Alexandra Jaritz

What makes Hilton special for you?

Vaughan: I've been with Hilton over 20 years. What I've loved about working with Hilton is the sense of unlimited opportunity. On a personal level, I've also enjoyed making lifelong friendships and the opportunity to see the world.

Jaritz: I have now been with Hilton for a little over a year. Having the opportunity to innovate and build a new brand from scratch backed by Hilton's strong brand reputation, its commitment to hospitality, and its powerful commercial engine really excited me to join Hilton.

Will you both talk about the brands you lead, and how hard is it to differentiate today?

Vaughan: Each Hilton brand caters to a different type of guest and we work very closely with each brand head to ensure we stay aligned with each brand identity. For example, Curio - A Collection by Hilton, is a global set of hotels hand-picked for their distinctive character and personality. The hotels selected to join the Curio collection themselves define the brand - we don't have a prescriptive build design. Most of these hotels are in that upscale luxury sector and appeal to passionate travelers seeking local discovery and authentic experiences. This is just one set of guests in this sector, and then there will be other luxury-minded guests who are more attracted to the type of luxury offered by Waldorf or Conrad.

DoubleTree by Hilton, on the other hand, is a fast-growing, global collection of more than 465 upscale hotels in gateway cities, metropolitan areas, and vacation destinations. DoubleTree differentiates itself with its CARE Culture, which is focused on ensuring guests receive human touch points during each part of their stay, starting with the presentation of a warm chocolate chip cookie upon arrival.

Even though the accommodations and amenities at some of our brands may have similarities, we do strive for distinct cultures that really set each brand apart.

Jaritz: The mid-scale segment today - priced, on average, in the \$80 to \$100 price range - is largely inconsistent, with relatively undifferentiated product, and with limited forward thinking design. The mid-scale segment hasn't really evolved much with the changing consumer demographics and psychographics. In the case of Tru, because the mid-scale segment is a sea of sameness, it was relatively easy to differentiate and actually be a game changer in that space.

How far can you go with service when you're looking at the \$80 to \$100 range?

Jaritz: The way we go about developing new brands is we look at the return on investment we want to drive - specifically, the cost to build and the operating margins. We spend a lot of time looking at not only the prototype costs, but at the whole operations model.

Labor is one of the biggest cost drivers and so we focus on leveraging technology and streamlining the operations of the hotel where possible, to free up time for our Team Members to deliver our Tru Spirit hospitality. Are we going to deliver it differently than a Waldorf or Curio? Absolutely, but we're leveraging different tactics to free up Team Members' time to focus on delivering Tru Spirit. For example, we will be deploying digital key and a self-service market payment system. We've also simplified our guest rooms and made them much more efficient to clean and maintain so we have time for better service in other areas. Finally, we're also creating a team culture characterized as being one Tru Team full of LIFE (loveable, imaginative, fearless, and energetic). As part of our one Tru Team approach, our Team Members will cross-share roles.

Is the Curio collection well understood today and how do you define what the true luxury experience is?

Vaughan: For Curio, we're really in that upscale luxury space and the consumer understands what collections are today better than they did five years ago.

We know that our consumers really want to have that local experience, which is what it's all about today. So we're focused on ensuring that the Curio experience is authentic to where each individual property is located. ●