



## Redesigning the Hotel Experience

An Interview with Jonathan Frolich,  
Vice President-Global Brands, Andaz



Exterior of Andaz Ottawa (left); terraces at Andaz Scottsdale (above)

**EDITORS' NOTE** Jonathan Frolich has held his current post since May 2015, where he is responsible for defining, communicating, and innovating the guest experience for Hyatt's Andaz brand. Previously he held the role of Vice President of Innovation. Before joining the corporate team, he held senior management positions at Hyatt hotels around the world including Andaz 5th Avenue (the second hotel under the boutique lifestyle brand), Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, Park Hyatt Los Angeles, and Park Hyatt Sydney. He received his Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of South Australia.



Jonathan Frolich

**COMPANY BRIEF** Global in scale while local in perspective, Andaz hotels ([andaz.hyatt.com](http://andaz.hyatt.com)) weave the sights, sounds, and tastes of their surroundings into each property for an experience that truly immerses guests in the eclectic culture of each local destination. Through personalized, unscripted service, Andaz hotels creates a barrier-free environment where guests are encouraged to explore their personal sense of style and become inspired by the spirit of the community. Thirteen Andaz hotels are currently open: Andaz 5th Avenue and Andaz Wall Street in New York, Andaz San Diego, Andaz West Hollywood, Andaz Napa, Andaz Savannah, Andaz Maui at Wailea, Andaz Peninsula Papagayo in Costa Rica, Andaz Ottawa ByWard Market, Andaz London Liverpool Street, Andaz Amsterdam Prinsengracht, Andaz Xintiandi in Shanghai, and Andaz Tokyo Toranomon Hills.

### Will you talk about what the Andaz brand stands for and how it has grown?

Andaz has been around since 2007 and it was designed around a deep understanding of our customers' needs. As part of Hyatt, we're passionate about being laser-focused in addressing guest needs, and designing experiences and brands accordingly.

Andaz came about as the lifestyle hospitality market was starting to move and grow, and it was meant to drive a specific stake in the ground in doing things differently. Andaz has redesigned the hotel experience by putting a focus on a few key areas, the first one being the removal of literal and figurative barriers that exist at most hotels. Specifically, Andaz has designed both experiences

and spaces that essentially break down barriers between our colleagues and guests to create authentic interactions and deep emotional connections.

We are passionate about celebrating the best of local, and Andaz was one of the first brands from a hotel perspective to do this. Each hotel delivers this in a number of ways, starting with hotel design. For example, Andaz 5th Avenue was designed with a great sense of place, so not only is it a New York inspired hotel with typical windows and loft ceilings, but its core theme is intrin-

sically rooted in Midtown Manhattan (a communal library room has bookshelves that contain a rotating content of literature curated by the New York Public Library, which is located right across the street).

Our goal is to ensure guests truly feel as though the surrounding neighborhood has been brought into each hotel, which is definitely a part of each Andaz hotel's food and beverage program. In addition to locally sourced complimentary mini bars, we partner with farmers within 100 miles to procure ingredients. We also hire local staff; we want our Andaz hosts to be able to connect guests with that authentic local spirit.

The most important differentiator for Andaz is about immersing guests in local culture, or a focus on weaving a rich tapestry of local culture into the guest experience at each of the 13 Andaz hotels globally. For example, the Andaz Salon program is a series of events that take place regularly with the goal of connecting guests with locals and creative influences that they might not find anywhere else. As an example, Andaz 5th Avenue has an ongoing partnership with the vibrant street art community in New York City.

When one arrives as a visitor at Andaz, they depart feeling more like a local.

### Are there consistencies among the Andaz properties within each market?

There is a consistent thread of fluidity at all hotels, as Andaz is very much barrier-free both literally and figuratively.

When we originally designed Andaz, we looked at deconstructing the typical/expected hotel experience so that a stay at one of our hotels was more akin to visiting the stylish home of a close friend or family member. Staying at someone's home means there is no front desk. Guests are greeted at the front door. If I'm the Andaz host, I take their bags, offer them a complimentary glass

of wine or coffee, and conduct the check-in experience wherever they would like. It creates a one-on-one experience that's unscripted and personal.

### How far do you go with technology without losing the personal touch?

Technology is there to enable the experience, but the experience is the priority. Technology should never replace human interaction because our guests want to understand the neighborhood and Andaz delivers that through meaningful interactions with local people.

### How large can the brand get while still maintaining an intimate feel?

We're thrilled about our pipeline of hotels. We just opened Andaz Ottawa in August, which is our first foray into the Canadian market. By early 2017, we will have also opened Andaz hotels in Mayakoba, Scottsdale, and Delhi – our first in the Indian market.

Later in 2017, we'll open Andaz hotels in Munich, Singapore, and Bali. Currently there are just over a dozen properties located in diverse and culturally rich destinations around the world, and as we continue to expand, it will be important to look to markets where we can continue to immerse our guests in local culture.

### How critical has it been to have Hyatt's support behind the Andaz brand?

While Andaz has strong recognition, our customers know and trust the excellence of Hyatt and the great benefits through the company's rewards program. Andaz guests get the best of the boutique hotel spirit without it feeling like they're staying at a typical hotel. They also get the backing of a trusted name that provides both reassurance and quality no matter where in the world they are.

### When it comes to attracting talent, is it more about culture fit or expertise?

We love to celebrate the passions of our people which, in some cases, helps our guests feel as though the surrounding neighborhood has been brought into each hotel. Andaz means "personal style" in Hindi, and several hotels even display artwork created by team members, which means they can talk about this passion point with guests on a personal level. We look for people that embrace that spirit of hospitality.

### What is the secret to being successful within the food and beverage space?

We always stay on top of trends to make sure we're innovating, but through the Andaz lens. The secret is to consistently deliver an experience that immerses in local culture. ●