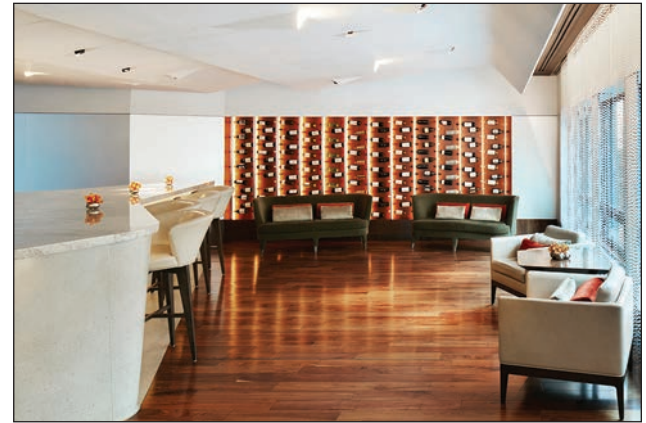




## Ahead of the Curve

An Interview with Robert Rechtermann,  
General Manager, Conrad New York



Deluxe King Bedroom suite (left); Atrio Wine Bar & Restaurant (above)

**EDITORS' NOTE** Robert Rechtermann arrived at Conrad New York following four-years as General Manager of the Five Star, Five Diamond Peninsula New York. Previously, Rechtermann held a range of management-level positions including Resident Manager of The Peninsula Chicago; Director of Operations at The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common; EAM F&B at The Ritz-Carlton, Boston; EAM F&B at the Five Diamond Hilton Short Hills; Director of Food & Beverage at Shutters on the Beach in Santa Monica, California; and Director of Food & Beverage at Hilton Long Beach. He holds a B.S. in hotel management from Fairleigh Dickinson University.



Robert Rechtermann

The Lower Manhattan area has almost fully come together with the completion of the World Trade Center as well as Brookfield Place and Westfield, and the Path station. Eighty-five percent of the stores are open, and this is creating a new destination in New York, which is making this area thrive. It's not the financial district anymore but a mix of many different businesses.

The rates are still under pressure but there is newness down here that makes it interesting and when people are coming to New York, they consider staying Downtown for a change.

**Is there a trend today to look at getting a deal on the room by perhaps waiting as long as possible to book?**

From the consumer perspective, the perception is that the longer they wait, the better the deal, but it depends on the time of year one is looking to come. In a perfect world, we start booking our rates on the lower side and we increase them as we get close to where we're relatively full and then leave our rates high. For some hotels that doesn't work, but I believe that's because they didn't have a good strategy to begin with. Dropping rates doesn't necessarily stimulate demand.

**Will you talk about where the property is today and are there changes on the horizon?**

We're fortunate that we're in a position to make changes. We have been open now for four and a half years. The hotel is in great shape in terms of the product, but we're already looking at what is next. The few things we weren't completely satisfied with when we renovated the building and opened a few years ago, we've already made some changes to.

I have owners that are willing to continually invest in the product so it can be a top competitor at all times. We want to be ahead of the curve when it comes to the product, so we're already discussing room renovations in the middle of 2017 to give it a soft goods upgrade and ensure we're perfect at all times.

**Is there a true awareness of the Conrad brand in the U.S. and how do you describe Conrad to those who haven't experienced it?**

The awareness in the Americas is growing every day. There is an incredible effort and momentum behind the scenes now to expand our presence in the U.S.

Chicago opened recently; Fort Lauderdale and D.C. are on the books to open in 2017 and 2018, and there is a lot of talk of new projects in the U.S. and internationally. We're going to experience a growth spurt in the coming years, which will increase awareness for the brand.

Our current brand marketing campaign is called Stay Inspired – we focus on inspiring travelers to try a curated one-, three-, or five-hour experience and engage in things happening in the local community around the hotel in each of our respective locations.

**Has Downtown become a seven-day-a-week market and are you surprised by that?**

Today, with the residential component in Battery Park and Tribeca, and the restaurants and shops that support that, combined with the transformation of the World Financial Center, it's a seven-day-a-week environment. It's just a matter of time before the rest of the world discovers Lower Manhattan as an alternative to Midtown and Times Square.

**How much of a differentiator is it for you to have an all-suite product?**

We're finding that business travelers love it. Our spacious suites offer a living room and a bedroom. This is great if one is traveling with a spouse or a family. It's a competitive advantage for us.

**Will you discuss the art component in the hotel?**

We have incredible contemporary artwork at the hotel and it's definitely part of our story. We have the advantage of size and space in our lobby, and the artwork throughout the guest rooms and meeting space was carefully selected to give the hotel a story. We work with the Public Art Fund and visiting artists to have the art be one of the many great stories of Conrad New York.

**How important is it to recognize and invest in your workforce?**

People love to be recognized so we're always working hard to not only make this a great place to stay but a great place to work. Hilton is in the midst of a significant campaign to promote the fact that all of our hotels are great places to work. ●

**PROPERTY BRIEF** Conrad New York ([conradnewyork.com](http://conradnewyork.com)) is located in Lower Manhattan's Battery Park City, with close proximity to the city's top shopping and dining destinations, including Westfield World Trade Center and Brookfield Place, in addition to historic and trendy neighborhoods such as Tribeca and Soho, and the Financial and Meatpacking Districts. Rising 16 stories along the Hudson River waterfront, the 463 all-suite luxury hotel is the first New York location for Conrad Hotels & Resorts, the global luxury brand of Hilton Worldwide. Conrad New York features spacious suites, each outfitted with integrated technology, flat-screen televisions, and individual climate control. The hotel features the seasonal, Loopy Doopy Rooftop Bar, with breathtaking views of the Statue of Liberty and New York Harbor. Conrad New York boasts over 30,000 square feet of adaptable meeting space, including the 6,200 square-foot Gallery Ballroom. The hotel was awarded a LEED Gold Certificate for new construction from the U.S. Green Building Council for sustainable building practices and design.

**Where do you see the New York City hotel market today?**

There is pressure on rates with all the new supply in New York. The good news is that New York City demand overall is high. More people are coming to New York every year but there are also many new hotels every year.