



Committed to Aruba

An Interview with
**Gabriel Castrillon, General Manager,
Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Spa and Casino**



Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Spa and Casino adult pool event area rendering (left); aerial view of the property (above); oceanfront king room (below)

EDITORS' NOTE Gabriel Castrillon began his career with Hyatt in 1984 and has held many leadership roles at Hyatt Regency properties across the United States. Most recently, he was general manager at Hyatt Regency Miami, and additionally served as an active member of the Greater Miami & the Beaches Hotel Association, the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association. He was awarded "2011 General Manager of the Year" for Hyatt North America's small hotel category in recognition of his exceptional leadership and contributions to the hospitality industry. Castrillon earned his bachelor's degree in business administration and management from Florida International University.



Gabriel Castrillon

PROPERTY BRIEF Located on 12 acres of magnificent beachfront property on Aruba's world-renowned Palm Beach, Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Spa and Casino (aruba.regency.hyatt.com) is a year-round resort with a reputation for refined hospitality. Its 359 modern guestrooms and suites with a tropical touch include soft colors, hand-crafted furniture, stone quartz bathrooms with 65-inch television sets, and Hyatt's signature Grand Bed. The hotel delivers a sense of authentic island chic with an emphasis on unique architecture that includes an open-air lobby, natural stone floors and colorful Caribbean accents. Recreational facilities are abundant and include a three-level pool complex complete with a two-story waterslide, a ZoiA Spa with fitness center, tennis courts, Camp Hyatt for kids with a game room, and a lively Hyatt Regency Casino. The property offers ten delectable food and beverage options, including the resort's signature restaurants Ruinas del Mar and Mexicardo. Nine meeting rooms and extensive outdoor areas are ideal for catered special events. The resort is conveniently located 15 minutes from Queen Beatrix International Airport and is within walking distance to Oranjestad, entertainment, dining and shopping.

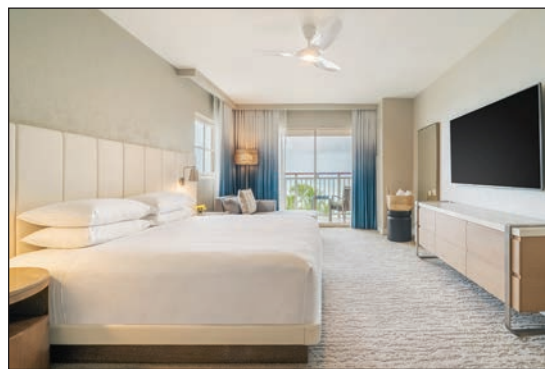
What is the current state of the Aruba hotel business?

There has been tremendous growth in the market. The number one asset for the Aruba destination is the sun and the beach experience. The most important thing about Aruba is that it's south

of the hurricane belt. Our weather is always perfect and we are not affected by the storms in the Caribbean. For the last four years, since the Caribbean has been so active weather-wise, Aruba was not affected, unlike a lot of the other islands in the Caribbean, which has benefited Aruba tremendously.

How is Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Spa and Casino positioned in the market?

The Hyatt brand and the commitment of the Hyatt family to Aruba dates back 30 years. Hyatt is one of the landmarks of the island and Hyatt continues to be 100 percent committed to the country of Aruba. One of the best features of the resort is its knowledge of the island. The location of our resort is in the prime area of Palm Beach. We believe that we have the best beach location. We also believe that we have the best landscaping in Aruba. All of this is crowned with our tremendous 30 years of experience servicing the destination.



Will you discuss the investments being made at the property?

Hyatt has engaged in a renovation and modernization of the resort over the past four years and it will continue for the next three years. We are fortunate to have completed a phase of the renovation in 2018 that was designed to bring a modern touch to the resort with light, very soothing colors that contribute to a very quaint Caribbean experience.

We are in the process of adding an adult pool, which will supplement the traditional pool that the resort has always had. We will now have two pools in two different areas of the resort. One will cater to families and the other one to adults. The colors and the themes of the guest rooms near the adult pool will be changed to bring them in line with the feel of the new adult

pool. In 2020, we will bring the complete landscaping design to encompass the new pool and the new guest rooms and we will be embarking on a renovation upgrade of our food and beverage experience.

What are the keys for a hotel to be successful in food and beverage in Aruba?

We are striving to create a resort experience and, at Hyatt, that resort experience includes not only the guest room product, but all the activities that we offer at the resort. When people come to Aruba, they spend most of their time outdoors. We now have the recreational areas with the two pools and the beachfront to be able to satisfy the needs of our guests for the sun and the water.

Throughout the day, we have tremendous facilities and we are upgrading them to elevate the food and beverage experience as part of the resort experience. We're looking at food and beverage trends and are always thinking about the wellness element as well while still offering Caribbean tastes through our food and beverage plan.

How critical is the focus on wellness for Hyatt?

Hyatt began focusing on wellness many years ago. That is now evolving from wellness to well-being. Hyatt has acquired a new brand called Miraval which specializes in well-being. The food and beverage component is important to well-being and we focus on how to eat healthy and how that can contribute to your life expectation. Another element of well-being is a positive mindset. As everybody is beginning to know and understand, the healthier your mind is, the healthier your body will be, so we are incorporating more of this into our well-being offerings.

Will you highlight Hyatt's commitment to its workforce?

Hyatt is 100 percent committed to Aruba and we are proud that 90 percent of our workforce is from Aruba. They bring the candor and the service orientation which is innate in the people of Aruba. The fact that Arubans speak four languages and are fluent in English is perfect for us because the majority of our customers are from the United States. We continue to support the local community and we continue to create opportunities for Arubans.

We are proud that Hyatt, throughout the world, cares for people so they can be their best. We bring this philosophy of Hyatt to Aruba and care for people and want them to have what they need to be their best. ●