

A New Golden Era

An Interview with Daniel A. Hostettler, CHA,
President and Chief Executive Officer, The Boca Raton, and President, North America, Relais & Châteaux

EDITORS' NOTE Daniel Hostettler has been the President of Relais & Châteaux North America since November 2017 and became the President and CEO of The Boca Raton in April 2021. Previously, he served as President and Group Managing Director of Ocean House Management where he was instrumental in the development, growth and management of the Ocean House and its sister property, Weekapaug Inn. Previously, he served as President and Managing Director of Lajitas – The Ultimate Hideout; as Managing Director of La Posada de Santa Fe Resort & Spa in Santa Fe, New Mexico; and the Summer Lodge Hotel and Spa in Dorset, England. He also held a variety of positions with Meadowood, Napa Valley, and was part of the opening team of The Peninsula, Beverly Hills. His education includes a BSBA in hotel and restaurant management from the University of Denver; a BSBA in finance from the University of Denver; a GMP from the School of Hotel Administration, Cornell University; a CDP from The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania; and Certified Hotel Administrator (CHA) from the American Hotel & Motel Association.



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river, engaging events, and unparalleled experiences for all ages. Designed as an ideal escape, remodeled rooms and suites will welcome guests to a stay like no other – where modern innovation, iconic style and ultimate leisure converge.

What excited you about the opportunity to lead The Boca Raton and made you feel it was the right fit?

The opportunity to lead The Boca Raton through its most significant evolution is the capstone of my career in the luxury hospitality industry. To be given the opportunity to lead a storied resort like this one back to its place among the top resorts in the world, while totally reimagining the guest experience into five distinct lodging properties each with their own service teams, amenity program and experiences only happens once in a lifetime.

How has The Boca Raton adapted its business during the pandemic and how proud are you to see the strength and resilience of its workforce during this unprecedented time?

The Boca Raton was resilient through the pandemic. When the work from home orders began, the resort team became creative. To-go

meals and cocktails were available for guests and members, and the resort made it a mission to continue to provide world-class service. We're continuing to navigate this bold new world of travel and are committed to being proactive and thoughtful about our offerings and programming. We understand that today's traveler is placing a great deal of trust in us, and our employees are as well. The Boca Raton's top priority continues to be the health and safety of our associates, members and guests.

As such, we continue to modify our protocols based on CDC guidelines, as well as Occupational Safety and Health Administration. In addition to our rigorous cleaning and sanitization standards, and enhanced training for our staff, we are taking it a step further. The Boca Raton now requires all associates to be vaccinated against COVID-19 or take weekly PCR tests. This policy is designed to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. In fact, we have partnered with the Board of Health Department to make vaccines available for our employees on-property.

The Boca Raton launched a transformational renovation in September 2020. Will you highlight this transformation and what guests can expect from the property?

This is a monumental year ahead for The Boca Raton. Our resort originally opened in

PROPERTY BRIEF The Boca Raton (thebocaron.com), amidst 200 waterfront acres, is a private, gated resort which provides a year-round escape for its members and guests. For nearly 100 years, people have experienced its unique vision of the coveted South Florida lifestyle. Now, a property-wide transformation is inspiring A New Golden Era, with new ways to eat, play and stay. Fresh energy revitalizes the Beach Club with new poolside culinary offerings, engaging events and unparalleled experiences. With generous living spaces, Bungalows invites guests to stay and enjoy easy access to all The Boca Raton has to offer. Every culinary experience is being reimagined. The Boca Raton is collaborating with Colin Cowie on its new Mediterranean offering, Marisol at the Beach Club, and with Major Food Group on its latest opening, The Flamingo Grill, a fresh take on the American chophouse. A dreamy oasis expertly designed to fit every kind of waterfront desire, Harborside is unveiling a reimagined Pool Club with three sparkling pools, luxe cabana service, fresh drink and dining offerings, a lazy



A rendering of a pool at the Harborside Pool Club



A rendering of the Harborside Pool Club

1926 as The Ritz-Carlton Cloister Inn and has since become an internationally recognized landmark. We are now entering a new golden era which is the most meaningful evolution in the resort's history, and will define The Boca Raton as one of the world's most preeminent Five-Star luxury resorts and private clubs. This winter, The Boca Raton will unveil a \$175 million phase one physical transformation. There will be enhancements to every guest experience, from exceptional accommodations to dynamic culinary concepts and innovative programming. Our iconic resort is spread over 200 lake and oceanfront acres and will feature a collection of five hotels located beachside and harborside, each with its own personality and style.

Our lodging products will reemerge as five distinct brand experiences. Beach Club is our oceanfront luxury escape featuring three pools set on a private stretch of golden beach. Yacht Club will reopen as an adult-only, all-suite luxury hotel with views of Lake Boca Raton and its yacht-lined promenade. The 27-story Tower will be incredible – the building is undergoing a \$45 million complete transformation by Rockwell Group, and will offer luxurious, modern design and brilliant coastal vistas. Bungalows is a residential hideaway which is ideal for extended stays. The three-story hotel features two-bedroom suites with full kitchens and furnished terraces and balconies. Cloister is the iconic heart and soul of the resort with grand architecture, lush grounds and hidden gardens.

We are a private club, which means that only our club members and resort guests are permitted to use the grounds and facilities – a truly exclusive setting.

How important has it been to maintain The Boca Raton history and heritage during the transformation and finding the right balance between protecting its tradition and making the property modern and current?

As we approach the 100th anniversary of The Boca Raton, it has been a priority of our ownership to bring this iconic property back to its rightful place as one of the top resort destinations in North America. We refer to the current evolution of The Boca Raton as “A New Golden Era” because it will pay homage to the resort and club's storied past while introducing innovative new amenities and a commitment to a five-star service standard.

The historic architecture story of The Boca Raton is a critical aspect of our brand DNA and a unique point of differentiation. We're committed to preserving the past as we lead the property into the future. In order to do that authentically, we've been working very closely with the Boca Raton Historical Society to ensure that our design plans complement the original vision for the resort. When planning our renovation, we spent countless hours studying the resort's original designs, which was a vision of famed architect Addison Mizner. The Boca Raton originally opened in 1926 as The Ritz-Carlton Cloister Inn. We've looked through incredible historic images that showcased the resort's many chapters.

At the same time, we are introducing new concepts that will inspire the extraordinary, along with enticing new amenities. As an area that will be fun for the whole family, the centerpiece of our waterfront destination will be Harborside Pool Club, a four-acre lakefront oasis featuring luxury cabanas, four pools, a 450-foot lazy river, two three-story-high slides, a double-standing

wave pool, a retail boutique, a 7,100 square foot event lawn, a kids club and a teens lounge, as well as new waterfront dining options.

How will culinary play into the guest and member experience?

The Boca Raton is creating one of the most exciting culinary destinations in the country. We are referring to it as “A World of Flavor,” which includes four signature restaurants in partnership with Major Food Group (MFG). The Flamingo Grill opened this summer as a glamorous take on the mid-century American chophouse. This winter, we'll unveil Sadelle's, the inventive brunch hotspot with locations in New York and Las Vegas, as well as all new restaurant concepts exploring Japanese and Italian cuisine.

There will be several other new food and beverage options – from fine dining to waterfront bites. Palm Court will feature shared plates and views of Lake Boca Raton, serving as a central gathering place for guests and members. I'm also very excited to unveil our plans for MB Supper Club, featuring live music and exquisite cuisine. The experience will be a throwback to the supper club era of Frank Sinatra when exclusive dinners with a show were offered in intimate, elegant settings. These are just a few of the highlights of what's to come.

What advice do you offer young people interested in a career in the hospitality industry?

I have always felt that if you find something you love to do, you will never work a day in your life. The hospitality industry is a way of life, and it's not for everyone, but if one enjoys being of service, meeting new and interesting people daily, and creating world-class experiences, then there is no better way to make a living. ●