

Intuitive Service

An Interview with Marc Bromley, Regional Vice President and General Manager, Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC

EDITORS' NOTE A veteran of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, Marc Bromley has a lifetime of experience in the hospitality industry. The first legacy General Manager in Four Seasons history, Bromley's lessons in hospitality started at an early age. His father, Stan Bromley, retired after a storied career in the industry which included 10 years at Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC. Since joining Four Seasons in 2006, Bromley has served at Four Seasons Hotel Chicago, Four Seasons Resort Maui at Wailea, Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon North, Four Seasons Resort Costa Rica at Peninsula Papagayo, and Four Seasons Resort Palm Beach. He also previously worked at Peninsula Hotels in Chicago and Los Angeles. Bromley studied at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, where he earned a degree in hotel administration, and studied at the University of Michigan.



Marc Bromley

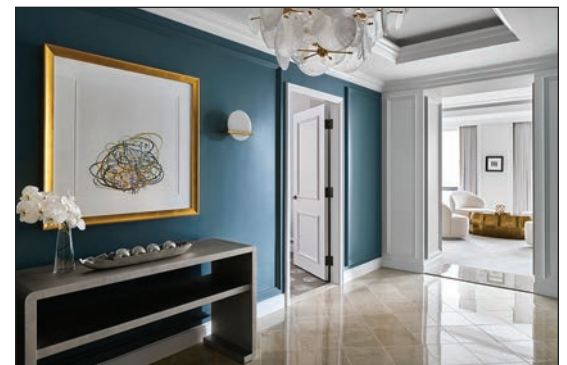
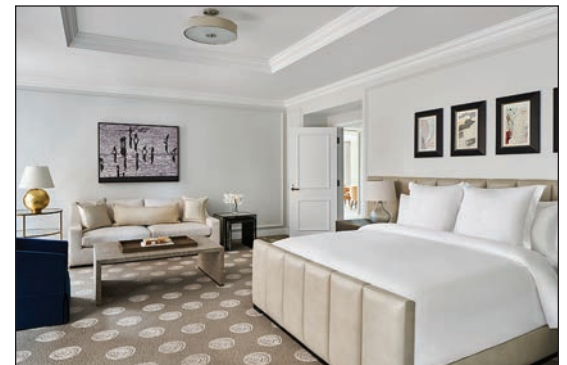
PROPERTY BRIEF Located in historic Georgetown – the U.S. capital's most exclusive residential neighborhood – the AAA Five Diamond, Mobil Five Star Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC (fourseasons.com/Washington), features 222 guest rooms, including 58 suites. Guests enjoy 24-hour concierge and room service, a state-of-the-art health and fitness club, luxury spa and award winning dining at Michael Mina's Bourbon Steak, a modern American Steakhouse, as well as Seasons restaurant with its legendary Sunday brunch.

The property is a member of Toronto-based Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

You grew up with a father who is a legendary hotelier. Did you know early on that you were interested in a career in the industry?

The last thing I thought I would do was enter the business since I saw the hours and the stress that my father experienced, and I

was more interested in sports and the outdoors. However, without realizing it, my father in his own way was training me and my brother while we were growing up on how to have attention to detail and service. He would put little pieces of paper on the floor outside our rooms and if we would walk by without picking it up, a lesson



Presidential Suite - West Wing bedroom, foyer and dining room



Presidential Suite - West Wing living area

on attention to detail would follow. We would be asked to clean our rooms which would lead to a room inspection. During the summers, while most of my friends were able to relax and not work, my father would arrange interviews for me at different properties where I would work in



Presidential Suite - East Wing living area (above) and Bourbon Steak, the hotel's award-winning steakhouse run by Chef Michael Mina and the recipient of Wine Spectator's Award of Excellence for its wine list since 2009 (below)

various intern or entry-level positions. I did not realize at the time that my father was providing me the opportunity to experience different hotels, from economy to luxury to ultra-luxury, and after a few summers I knew that this is what I wanted to do.

What excited you about the opportunity to lead Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC and what are your priorities for the property?

I recognize the legends who have come before me at this property. It was opened by Wolf Hengst, who was a former president of the company and a major influence in my life. Chris Hunsberger, Christian Clerc, Dirk Burghartz, David Bernard, as well as my father, Stan Bromley, all led this property – these are people who have been leaders in our company and I recognize I am building on their work and legacy. I also recognize that Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC has four decades of history and an established workforce with many people who have been at the property for much of its existence. I came in and first spent my time watching and listening and then looked at where there were opportunities to evolve and innovate. This is an iconic and legendary hotel and my focus is to celebrate its history and heritage while making sure it remains relevant and current by undertaking targeted renovations and creating new experiences for our guests to enjoy.

We have guests who have been coming to the property since its opening four decades ago and we have new guests experiencing Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC for the first time. We will always be committed to maintaining what Four Seasons is all about which is providing modern luxury and delivering the best service in the market, while staying current and relevant.



How do you define the keys to a true luxury hotel experience today?

Luxury is about anticipating the needs of the guest and providing intuitive service while leveraging technology to meet the guests where they want to be met, whether that is in person with the human touch or through an app, so that we are providing personalized and customized service.

Four Seasons Hotel Washington, DC has a strong suite offering. Will you highlight the suite product and do you see this as a differentiator for the property?

This is a huge differentiator for us. We have a Royal Suite with bulletproof windows which is the only suite of its kind

in the market and is perfect for dignitaries, heads of state and moguls of business. We have six newly renovated Presidential Suites and have great demand for these suites with delegations that come to Washington, DC. The property has a total of 222 rooms of which 58 are suites which is a heavily tilted suite inventory which has served us really well.

How has the role of the general manager evolved and with the financial pressures and responsibilities of the job, how important is it that hospitality stays at the forefront?

I would define the role in one word – relationships. That relationship can be with a handshake and smile in the front lobby, a phone call or handwritten note when a guest gets to the room, or an e-mail when the guest returns home from their stay. That relationship works differently based on the type of hotel or location of the property, but hospitality at its core is about relationships. There is no question that financial issues and asset management and other responsibilities are critical today, but it is essential to still find ways to be in front of the guests in order to build relationships.

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

My advice is to take the time to learn all aspects of the business so that when you move up and assume other roles, you have the experience and knowledge to succeed and continue to progress. There are many nuances that go into being a general manager and while I do think that the time it might take for qualified individuals to achieve this position has shortened, you need to have a deep understanding of how a hotel works and all the aspects of the job so that when the time comes to meet with an employee or greet a guest or address budget concerns, you are prepared and ready to meet the challenge. ●