

Personal Style

An Interview with Julian Tucker, General Manager, Andaz West Hollywood

EDITORS' NOTE *Julian Tucker is a 25-year Hyatt career veteran with extensive experience in the hospitality world. He started off his Hyatt career at the Hyatt Regency Milwaukee in the security department and was promoted to Director of Security before becoming Executive Housekeeper. Tucker then took the role of Front Office Manager at the Hyatt Regency Chicago followed by serving in several department head roles at the Hyatt Regency Long Beach and Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort and Spa in California. He then served as the Director of Rooms at the Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Center before spending six years in the Caribbean as Director of Rooms at the Hyatt Regency Trinidad and Hyatt Regency Aruba Resort Spa and Casino. Prior to joining Andaz West Hollywood, he was the Director of Rooms at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa in Bonita Springs, Florida. Tucker's community outreach affiliations include working with the West Hollywood Chamber of Commerce on a task force to bring more Black business opportunities to the area.*



Julian Tucker

Will you provide an overview of Andaz West Hollywood and how the property is positioned in the market?

Andaz sits within Hyatt's lifestyle division and competes directly with the luxury boutique market in WeHo and Hollywood as well as brands like W and Sofitel. We are heavily dependent on the entertainment, fashion and production markets, and Australia and the U.K. are big feeder markets for us for leisure travel. Andaz means personal

style in Hindu and the goal is to seek out guests who are curious about the local culture and bringing those cultures inside for a unique experience like none other.

How did Andaz West Hollywood adapt its business to address the challenges caused by the pandemic?

We have all had to reposition ourselves to adjust and adapt to the changing needs of our guests while, at the same time, continue to provide the experience that our guests are accustomed to. The balance can be challenging

but the key has been really taking the time to test the limits of what is possible and reimagining everything from touchless check-in to mobile key options and understanding the guest's preference as it relates to servicing guestrooms.

How proud are you to see the resilience of the Andaz West Hollywood team during this challenging and unprecedented time?

I could not ask for a better group of colleagues to work alongside, from being closed for three months and then reopening and operating with minimal staff under very restrictive circumstances, the team stood strong and came together to ensure the guests that we had in-house felt cared for and safe. I feel blessed to be able to lead such a great team.

Will you highlight Andaz West Hollywood's accommodations and suite offering?

Our room product is a homage to our rich rock 'n' roll history with a retro yet contemporary appeal. The designer's goal is to ensure you know that you were in the famed "Riot Hyatt" but at the same time ensure all the comforts that a lifestyle hotel brings.

PROPERTY BRIEF *Andaz West Hollywood (hyatt.com/en-US/hotel/california/andaz-west-hollywood) is Los Angeles' iconic rock 'n' roll hotel located on the famous Sunset Strip in West Hollywood, California, where musical history, celebrity and style come together. Formerly known as the Riot House, the property – then called Continental Hyatt House and later the Hyatt on Sunset – served as the home of some of rock 'n' roll's most memorable tales by being the choice hotel for rock legends including Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, The Who, Duran Duran, The Doors, and more. Rebranded as an Andaz – Hyatt's lifestyle collection – in 2009, the stylish hotel is more alluring and artful than ever, featuring 240 guest rooms, including 21 suites, and spectacular views of the Hollywood Hills on one side and the Sunset Strip and Downtown Los Angeles on the other. Andaz West Hollywood also offers professional party, meeting and event planning, as well as weekly rooftop music and entertainment. Inspired event venues including the highest rooftop pool in Los Angeles, acclaimed Riot House restaurant, and glamorous cocktail parties known as salon events, further make this chic West Hollywood hotel a must-visit destination.*



Public areas of Andaz West Hollywood reflect the property's rock 'n' roll heritage

Andaz's goal is to play on the senses wherever and whenever possible. Inspiring, immersing and creating an unscripted experience are all part of what we try to accomplish with every inch of the hotel. We have a total of 240 rooms, 21 of which are suites including our Penthouse, Presidential and newly added Panorama Suite, each with their own unique flair and design that screams West Hollywood, art and music.

Andaz West Hollywood has a strong dining/food and beverage product. What are the keys to being successful in food and beverage for a hotel, especially when located in a market such as West Hollywood that has a strong local restaurant offering?



You have spent over 25 years with Hyatt. What has made Hyatt special for you and a place where you have wanted to spend your career?

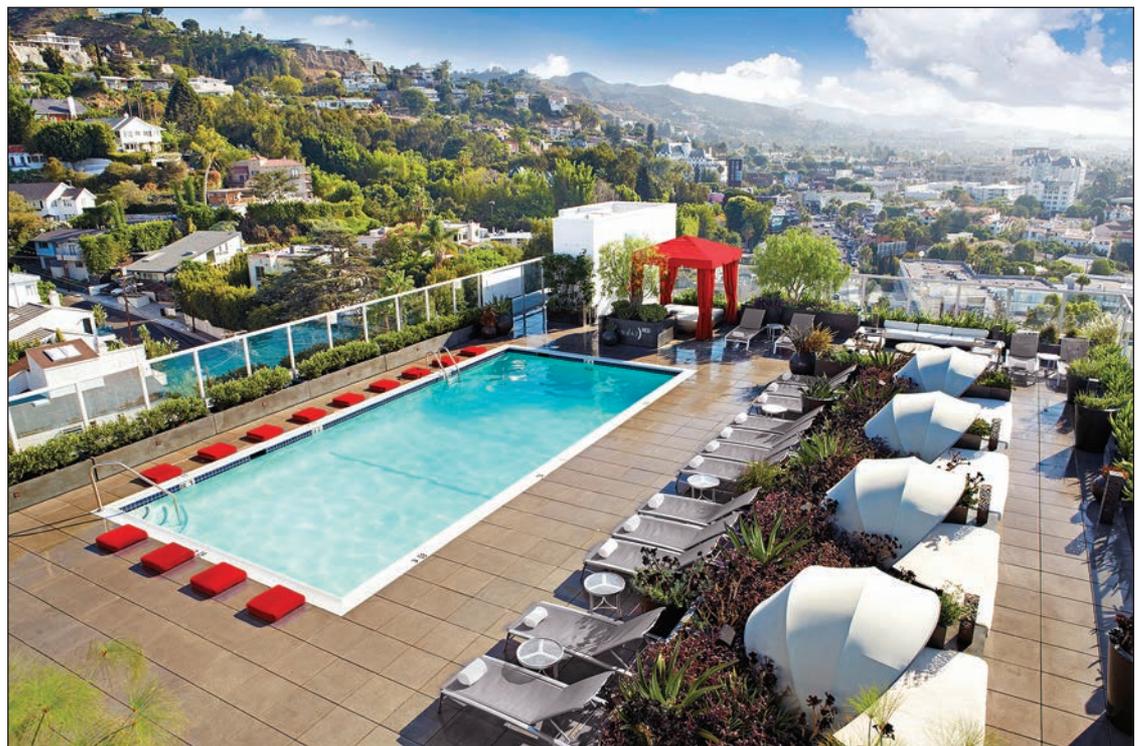
As I mentioned, I grew up in this business. My first position was a third shift Security Officer when I was 19 years old and, to be honest, I was not sure about a career in hospitality until I was about three years into it. I discovered that this was what I wanted to do with my career and was fortunate enough to work with some great leaders who really invested in my development. As a Black kid from the inner-city of Milwaukee, I never thought I would have the chance to see so many different places. Hyatt gave me that opportunity, from working in the Caribbean at places like Aruba and Trinidad & Tobago, to going to Shanghai, China to learn from some of our top leadership at Hyatt's Foundation for the Future Leadership program which is designed for up-and-coming future GM's. I am very grateful to work for such a forward-thinking company that values diversity, equity and inclusion. ●



The dining experience has always been a big part of our hotel. Being able to play around with our rich rock 'n' roll heritage and creating some unique items is extremely fun. Our strategy has been to use that to our advantage, understanding there are a lot of dining options in WeHo. We have really tried to carve out our place and offer a very whimsical beverage program with unique craft cocktails that play on the hotel's history and vibe. Our menu items reflect a cool, funky hangout spot where you can look out onto the Sunset Strip and enjoy locally sourced food and drinks that reflect the WeHo swagger.

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

Having grown up in this industry, I have had the opportunity to see it from a lot of different angles. I would say the biggest thing you can do is learn as many different positions as you can. The more you get to know each area, the better leader you will become. I credit my success to getting involved in trying to grasp as much knowledge as I could. Finding a mentor who can invest in your growth and development will also give you some insight into other areas of the industry.



Andaz West Hollywood guest room (top); rock 'n' roll mural (center) and rooftop pool (above)