

Hard Rock Style

An Interview with Karin Kopano, Managing Director, Hard Rock Hotel New York

EDITORS' NOTE With nearly a dozen hotel openings under her belt, Karin Kopano brings her extensive expertise and unmatched passion for new property launches to the Hard Rock Hotel New York, which opened its doors in April 2022. She most recently served as the Managing Director of The Knickerbocker Hotel, where she oversaw all aspects of the Manhattan hotel's operations. Over the last decade, Kopano has held a host of leadership positions with noteworthy hospitality and entertainment brands including Morgans Hotel Group, Hyatt Hotels and Resorts, Gansevoort Hotels, and Proper Hotels. Her career began at The Shore Club in Miami where she practiced her craft alongside hospitality visionaries such as Ian Schrager. Kopano earned a BA degree in hospitality from Florida International University.



Karin Kopano

PROPERTY BRIEF The Hard Rock Hotel New York (hardrockhotels.com/new-york), located between the Theatre District and Radio City Music Hall, includes extraordinary entertainment venues, 446 guestrooms and suites across 36 floors, innovative dining, and RT60 rooftop bar and lounge overlooking the world's most iconic skyline. The property offers access to the best of Midtown Manhattan with Broadway, Rockefeller Center, and Fifth Avenue shopping steps away.

Will you provide an overview of Hard Rock Hotel New York and how the property is positioned in the market?

Hard Rock Hotel New York is the newest hotel in Midtown Manhattan, located in the heart of the former "Music Row" on West 48th Street. It's no secret that entertainment is the heartbeat of the Hard Rock Hotels brand. From the moment our doors opened in April 2022, we have been committed to delivering live music across all public spaces with a dynamic and engaging approach to entertainment programming. Our hotel is suitable for leisure and business travelers, corporate groups, and weddings.

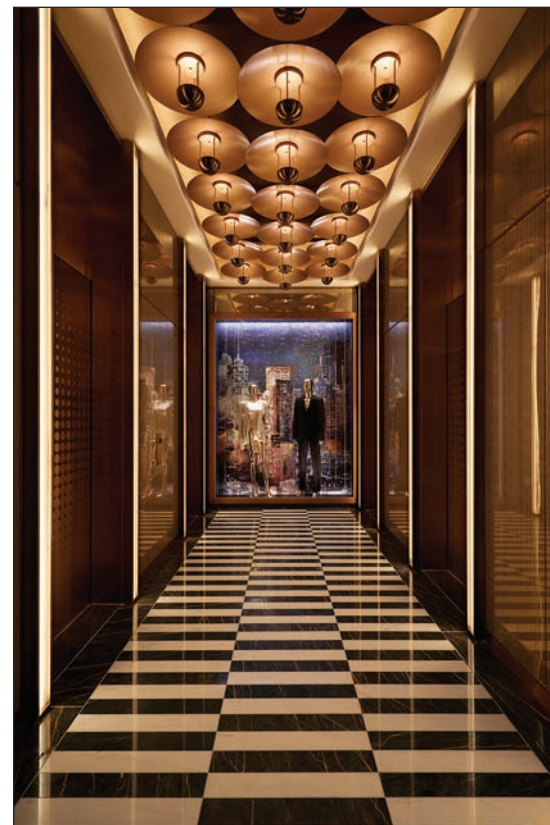
How valuable is it to have such a strong suite product and do you see this as a differentiator for Hard Rock Hotel New York?

The competition in New York City hospitality is fierce, so it's important to have a diverse

selection of room categories, especially in the entertainment business. A standout for us is the bi-level Rock Star Suite. Endowed with city views, contemporary artwork and bespoke memorabilia, my favorite part is the expansive 1,600 square foot terrace and free-standing red bathtub with breathtaking views of the Manhattan skyline. Perfect for guests seeking privacy or groups hosting an intimate event, the suite is so versatile and we've seen high demand since debuting in the spring from hosting VIPs to celebrating special moments, like our grand opening party.

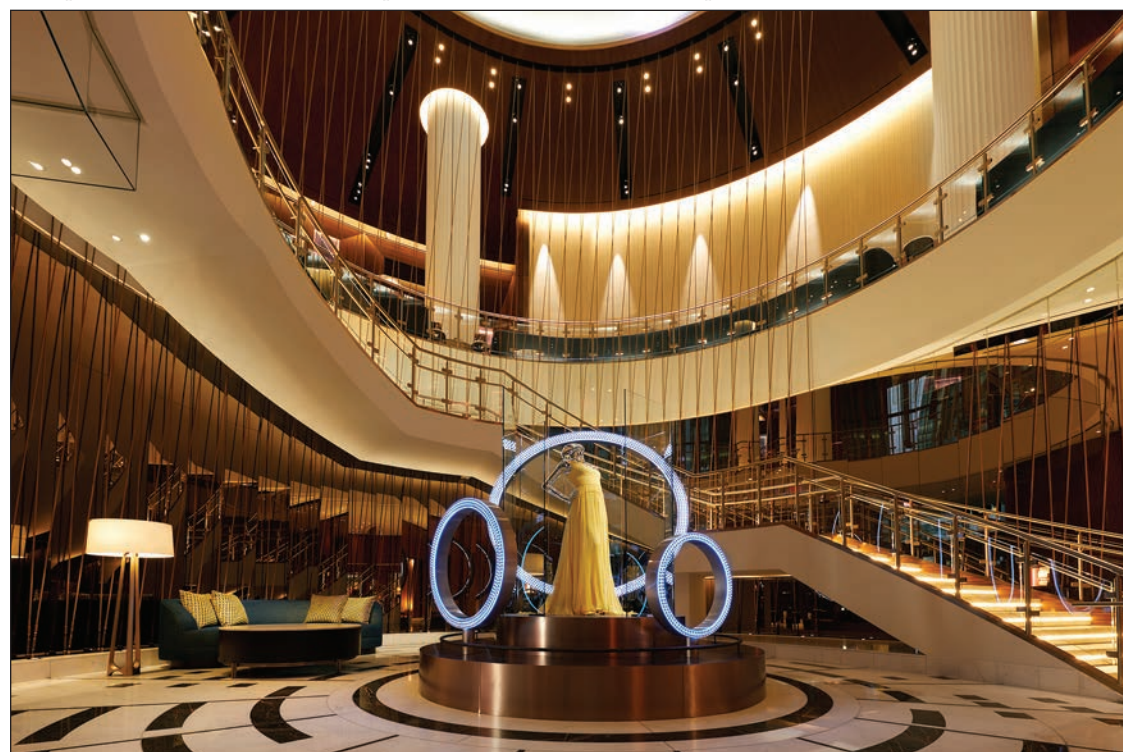
How has Hard Rock Hotel New York approached its restaurant/food and beverage offerings?

Our food and beverage offerings are meant to be a focal point as much as the music and entertainment. From the stunning views at RT60 Rooftop Bar and Lounge, to an upscale bespoke culinary experience at NY Steak and all-day farm-fresh dining at Sessions, the hope is to provide a range of dining options that suit



Hard Rock Hotel New York elevator lobby

the afterwork crowds, theatergoers en route to a Broadway show, and of course, people visiting and staying in the center of New York City. The variety of options, modern approach to dining, and cohesive design have proven successful alongside special programming and seasonal specials.



Hard Rock Hotel New York lobby

Will you discuss Hard Rock Hotel New York's focus on offering personalized service and a customized guest experience?

We always strive to offer our guests access, because that's the key to a memorable New York City experience. In true Hard Rock style, we offer an array of signature brand experiences and amenities, but we always put a localized twist on it. For example, guests are invited to exchange the traditional city map for Soundtracks® interactive area guides which are curated by our team at Hard Rock and musical artists to showcase the best of the city. A signature for the hotel is our Sound of Your Stay® program, where guests can appreciate music as it was intended on a Crosley record player with Wax®, listen to music with Tracks® featuring curated playlists, or jam with Picks® and request a Fender guitar delivered to your room with over-ear headphones and an amplifier. We also seek out partnerships with local personalities to create moments for our guests that they can't find elsewhere like teaming up with popular jeweler to the stars Mona Assemi on a shopping package or creating a bespoke bookable experience with the world-famous Radio City Rockettes.

How critical is it for Hard Rock Hotel New York to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of the guests it serves?

It's essential. At Hard Rock Hotel New York, we strive to create a caring and equal environment for all. Our brand's core mottos, "Love All-Serve All," "Take Time To Be Kind," "Save the Planet" and "All Is One" guide us in that mission. Since we are located in the heart of New York City, also known as America's melting pot, our workforce encompasses a diverse group of individuals across all levels and departments.



A booth at NYY Steak restaurant



The Rock Star Suite living room

How do you define the role of the managing director and what are the keys to being effective in the role?

In my role as Managing Director, I am continuously seeking new opportunities and avenues to stand apart and remain ahead of the curve with not only property and guest experiences, but within the development of my team. I am responsible for building and continuing to develop a dynamic team, managing sales and marketing strategies, and facilitating relationships within the community to strengthen the hotel's philanthropic efforts and footprint in

New York City. I believe a key to being an effective manager is to be passionate about developing young talent which is why I have placed an emphasis on creating mentorship programs throughout my career in areas such as female empowerment and management training for international students.

What excited you about the opportunity to lead Hard Rock Hotel New York and made you feel it was the right fit?

I have opened nearly a dozen hotels throughout my career, and I am passionate about new property launches. Hard Rock's core mottos, "Love All-Serve All," "Take Time To Be Kind," "Save the Planet" and "All Is One," also piqued my interest in the role, as these professional brand pillars seamlessly aligned with values that I have strived to live out personally each day.

Do you feel that there are strong opportunities for women to grow and lead in the hotel business?

Yes! This is something that I am very passionate about. Throughout my career, I have placed a strong emphasis on providing opportunities to young women to grow in their careers. The hospitality industry offers a nourishing environment for women, and I personally have helped develop mentorship programs that specifically focus on female empowerment.

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

The best advice that I would give is to always say yes to opportunities. Gain experience in all levels in all departments – from front-of-house to back-of-house, management to housekeeping. The knowledge and experience that you acquire is irreplaceable and will eventually lead you to new opportunities that will further enhance your career. ●