

## Timeless Glamour

An Interview with Octavia Marginean-Tahiroglu, General Manager, The St. Regis New York

**EDITORS' NOTE** With more than 20 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Octavia Marginean-Tahiroglu brings a wealth of knowledge to her new role at The St. Regis New York. She is a longstanding member of The St. Regis New York family, having served as the Hotel Manager since 2015. In 2021, Marginean-Tahiroglu successfully led the hotel's reopening, welcoming travelers from around the world back to the beloved property. Prior to joining The St. Regis New York, she served as the General Manager of The Tribeca Grand Hotel and the Deputy General Manager of The Soho Grand Hotel. She began her work with Marriott International in 2004 with The Westin New York at Times Square, and first joined The St. Regis New York in 2006 as the Front Office Manager. Marginean-Tahiroglu attended Hunter College in New York where she received her BA degree in sociology. She is currently enrolled in the MBA Program at Zicklin School of Business, Baruch College.



Octavia Marginean-Tahiroglu

**PROPERTY BRIEF** The St. Regis New York ([stregisnewyork.com](http://stregisnewyork.com)), originally founded by John Jacob Astor over a century ago, is considered to be one of the finest hotels in the world. The majestic Beaux Arts exterior, elegant public spaces, exquisitely designed guest rooms and suites, and unparalleled, bespoke service have preserved its legendary status for more than 100 years. The hotel is also home to the famed King Cole Bar, the birthplace of the original Bloody Mary. Ideally located in the heart of Manhattan at the corner of Fifth Avenue and 55th Street, The St. Regis New York is steps from the city's finest shopping, restaurants and museums.

**Will you provide an overview of The St. Regis New York and how the property is positioned in the market?**

Born of a distinctive legacy, The St. Regis New York was conceived by Colonel John Jacob Astor IV more than a century ago, and the timeless glamour of Astor's vision still defines this cherished landmark today. A hotel crafted



The lobby of The St. Regis New York

for modern connoisseurs desiring the finest experiences imaginable, The St. Regis New York has defined bespoke luxury from 1904 to the present and features 171 luxurious guest-rooms and 67 expansive suites. Our famed King Cole Bar still stands as one of New York City's most iconic watering holes, serving up the Red Snapper, the original Bloody Mary, under the watchful eye of Maxfield Parrish's Old King Cole Mural. Standing at New York's best address on the corner of 5th Avenue and 55th Street, the hotel is one of the city's premier luxury hospitality experiences with a legacy of exceptional service and standout signature rituals and traditions.

**The St. Regis New York has a strong suite product. Will you highlight this offering and do you see this as a differentiator for the property?**

Our suites continue to be an exceptional point of differentiation for The St. Regis New York. With 67 suites across multiple categories including the exceptional Presidential, Imperial, and Royal suites and our designer suites – the Bentley Suite and Dior Suite – over a quarter of our guest room offerings are classified as suites. Equipped with our St. Regis Signature Butler Service, our spacious suites allow guests to feel as if they are staying in their very own Manhattan apartment with key design elements including original crystal Waterford chandeliers and elegant crown moldings as well as beautiful, large-format photographic artwork, vibrant-hued fabrics, and stunning beveled mirrors.

**How has The St. Regis New York approached its food and beverage offering and what are the keys for a hotel to be successful in this area?**

We offer two separate culinary experiences, Astor Court and the King Cole Bar,



Royal Suite living room



which has a devoted following. The King Cole Bar is home to Maxfield Parrish's famed Old King Cole Mural, which has been present for many historic events including the creation of the Bloody Mary cocktail by St. Regis bartender Fernand Petiot in 1934. We thrive to honor the hotel's heritage and founder, John Jacob Astor, through our food and beverage offerings. The signature rituals and offerings such as the Bloody Mary and nightly champagne sabering are all innate to our history, but offered in a modern way.

**Will you discuss The St. Regis New York's focus on offering personalized service and a customized guest experience?**

At The St. Regis New York, we offer our guests a range of bespoke services, but the hallmark is our St. Regis Butler Service – available to each and every guest. Building upon more than 100 years of legendary service, The St. Regis Butler acts as a dedicated personal assistant, managing and facilitating a virtually unlimited array of guest requests, none of which are too little or too grand. Available 24 hours a day, The St. Regis Butler is one of the hotel's most visible representations of its famed level of service and attention to detail.

**How critical is it for The St. Regis New York to build a diverse and inclusive workforce to mirror the diversity of the guests it serves?**

Marriott International is committed to inclusion and diversity and we drive that locally here, at The St. Regis New York. We are proud to have associates who represent over 80 countries from all continents who can communicate with guests in different languages in addition to understanding in-depth cultural nuances.



*The St. Regis New York Roof Ballroom*

**How do you define the role of the general manager and what are the keys to being effective in the role?**

The general manager is ultimately responsible for the oversight of a property from a revenue generating and a cost efficiency perspective; in short, profit and loss responsibilities. The role demands passion for what we do. We are stewards of our stakeholders and have their best interests as our north star. Successful leaders find their inner voice and are authentic in their leadership as they set up goals, delegate, inspire, and develop people.

Effective communication and a good understanding of people support the building of strong teams. Through good communication, leaders have the ability to clearly translate the vision and the mission of an organization. Decisiveness is also a very important trait of a general manager. In order to make sound decisions, general managers constantly work on improving their critical thinking, finance, and project management skills. We are professionals who are very determined to make every day count.

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

Absolutely. The industry overall has seen a significant increase in its female representatives in executive and C-level roles. At The St. Regis New York, there are no barriers for female career growth. We have a strong female representation as our Director of Human Resources, Director of Finance, Director of Sales and Marketing, Director of Rooms Operations, and we are all women. We walk the talk at The St. Regis New York.

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

The best way to break into this industry is to take advantage of opportunities where you can deeply understand the operations of a hotel. This knowledge will be the foundation for endless success. Find joy in every role you decide to take. Focus on the skill of resilience so you can overcome obstacles quickly and reach your career goals. Know there is no experience in this industry that is not relevant to your career. Make yourself bountiful in your experiences. Do not ever surrender. Always look forward. Do not regret your decisions. ●



*King Cole Bar*