

Inspiring Exploration

An Interview with Alex Ohebshalom, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Flâneur Hospitality

EDITORS' NOTE Alexander Ohebshalom is the Founder and CEO of Flâneur Hospitality. As a creative entrepreneur, Ohebshalom is passionate about developing spaces that magnify the freedom and transformation he experienced throughout his world travels. Inspired by the concept of the flâneur, Ohebshalom established The Fifth Avenue Hotel as a tangible expression of this ideology, where guests uncover imaginative experiences, intimate sensibilities, and sensorial spaces designed to encourage exploration, fascination and wonder. Throughout the course of his career, Ohebshalom has touched all areas of real estate, having supervised and completed roughly one million square feet of best-in-class residential, retail, and hospitality properties. A born and bred New Yorker, Ohebshalom is an alumnus of Harvard Business School and earned a bachelor of business administration in real estate development from the Zicklin School of Business.



Alex Ohebshalom

gastronomic destination with an array of restaurants and bars under the direction of James Beard Award-winning Chef Andrew Carmellini. The hotel's signature restaurant, Café Carmellini, distills Chef Carmellini's 20-year career cooking in New York City into an extraordinary dining experience. The Portrait Bar is an intimate, wood-paneled space where guests enjoy sophisticated cocktails and snack on elevated bar fare surrounded by a collection of remarkable art. The Fifth Avenue Hotel is a member of

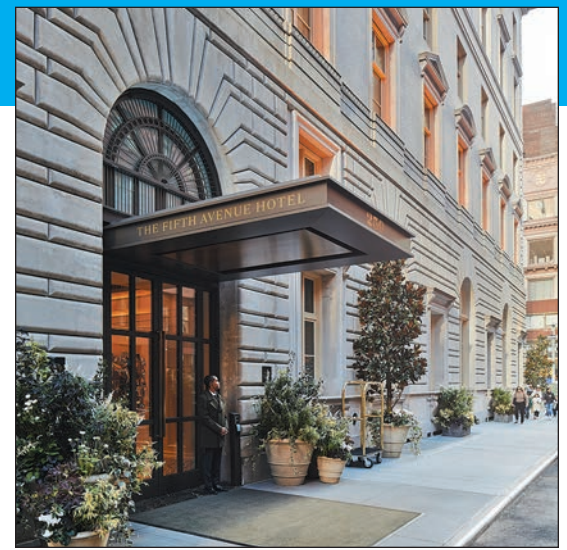
Leading Hotels of the World.

What was your vision for creating Flâneur Hospitality and how do you define its mission?

My vision for Flâneur Hospitality is rooted in the concept of the flâneur – someone who is deeply present and fully absorbs the world around them and all of its intricacies. Our mission is to inspire exploration, curiosity, and discovery in our guests. With the launch of The Fifth Avenue Hotel, our first project, we aim to cultivate an environment that not only embraces but actively

COMPANY BRIEF Flâneur Hospitality (flaneurhospitality.com) is a hotel development and management company where intuitive service, imaginative experiences, and intimate sensibilities combine to bring timeless, illuminating and inspiring hospitality to life through a balance and harmony of luxury, experience, and environment.

The Fifth Avenue Hotel (thefifthavenuehotel.com) welcomes travelers and New Yorkers alike to an enchanting experience in the heart of Manhattan. At the northwest corner of Fifth Avenue and 28th Street, The Fifth Avenue Hotel charts its own course, encouraging guests to slow down and fully engage with their surroundings. Led by the internationally acclaimed firms, Martin Brudnizki Design Studio as interior designer and Perkins Eastman as architect, in collaboration with Flâneur Hospitality, the hotel features 153 guestrooms and suites. Steeped in history, The Fifth Avenue Hotel is composed of The Mansion, a historic landmark designed by storied architecture firm McKim, Mead & White, and The Tower, a striking new 24-story glass tower designed by Perkins Eastman and PBDW Architects. Paying homage to the legacy and lifestyle of those who once resided on Fifth Avenue, the design offers a distinctly residential vision that immerses guests in an atmosphere that suggests a home away from home. The property offers an outstanding



encourages this mindful and leisurely approach to life.

Will you provide an overview of The Fifth Avenue Hotel and how the property is positioned in the market?

The Fifth Avenue Hotel offers a singular hospitality experience that did not previously exist in New York. The hotel itself is comprised of a historic landmark McKim, Mead and White building – affectionately dubbed The Mansion – that was once the site of Gilded Age society figure Ms. Charlotte Goodridge's Fifth Avenue mansion and a new tower – appropriately named The Tower – by Perkins Eastman and PBDW Architects. The Mansion has been in my family for decades, standing as a vacant reminder of New York's rich history. The evolution of the NoMad neighborhood over the past decade inspired me to bring the building back to life, paying homage to the legacy of lifestyle of those who resided on Fifth Avenue.

How valuable it is for The Fifth Avenue Hotel to have such a strong suite product?

Our goal is for guests to feel like they are stepping into a cabinet of curiosities when they enter The Fifth Avenue Hotel,



The Fifth Avenue Hotel entrance (top); Café Carmellini (above)

where there is something new to discover at every turn. We wanted to create guestroom and suite categories that felt distinct in and of themselves, while also speaking to the ethos of the hotel overall. Collaborating with Martin Brudnizki, we meticulously designed the suites to inspire curiosity while honoring the building's legacy. For instance, we have three Fifth Avenue Suites in the Mansion, which overlook the corner of Fifth Avenue and 28th Street. With the sweeping floor to ceiling windows, you feel immersed in the city while also comfortable in your own space. The living area and bedroom are separated by a long hallway housing the bathroom, which makes guests feel like they are checking into their own apartment within the hotel. Other distinct design touches like our custom mother-of-pearl inlaid maxi bars, hand-blown Murano glass chandeliers, and hand-painted Chinese oak cabinets speak to the hotel's unique sense of place. Another design detail I am proud of is that each floor hallway and guestroom features unique pieces of art – over 600 in total – ranging from commissioned works to vintage thrift finds.

How has The Fifth Avenue Hotel approached its culinary offerings and what are the keys to being successful in this part of the business?

We tapped James Beard Award-winning Chef Andrew Carmellini and NoHo Hospitality to lead our culinary program. At the hotel's signature restaurant, Café Carmellini, Chef Carmellini's menu marries Italian and French cooking with a classic New York feel that's both modern and sophisticated. The restaurant marks his return to fine dining, and we are incredibly proud of the restaurant. Continuing our ethos of exploration, discovery, and curiosity, The Portrait Bar, under the direction of Darryl Chan, offers a mix of



Mansion Junior Suite

modern and classic cocktails inspired by worldly travels. This thread of constant discovery is key to fostering a rich sense of place at The Fifth Avenue Hotel.

Where do you see growth opportunities for Flâneur Hospitality?

I am incredibly excited about the future of Flâneur Hospitality. The Fifth Avenue Hotel is our flagship property – our ode to New York and our mission in hospitality – but we envision expanding Flâneur Hospitality to encompass all facets of lifestyle. Specifically, at The Fifth Avenue Hotel, we've initiated cultural programming, inviting influential

minds from various intersecting industries to foster insightful conversations.

Did you always know that you had an entrepreneurial spirit and desire to build your own business?

I am incredibly fortunate to have explored many extraordinary places around the world, such as Marrakesh, Laos, and Myanmar. These experiences left a profound impact on me, and I wanted to bring that vision to life for others. It's been a decade-long journey of learning and growth, and I've found immense fulfillment in my career.

What do you feel are the keys to effective leadership and how do you approach your management style?

Effective leadership is about surrounding yourself with an imaginative and capable team that supports each other and fosters creative thinking. In our industry, thinking outside the box is not just expected; it's a skill that must be continuously refined. I am grateful to be surrounded by a team of *flâneurs* who are not only talented, but also genuinely passionate about hospitality and our mission. Every achievement is a collective achievement, and I am continually in awe of the hard work and dedication of our team.

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

As a fairly young hotelier myself, my advice for young professionals in hospitality is to immerse yourself in every aspect of operations. Understand the importance of guest experience, operational efficiency, and the financial dynamics that drive success. Invest in continuous learning, stay abreast of industry trends, and prioritize building strong relationships with guests and staff alike. Remember, hospitality is not just a business – it's about creating memorable experiences for guests and staff equally. ●



Fifth Avenue Suite living area