

THE ILHA'S

Annual Hospitality Conference Wrap-Up

By Iris Estrada

Thank you to everyone who was able to join us earlier this month for INSPIRE SUMMIT '17 — the International Luxury Hotel Association's 6th annual hospitality conference — and for making it an incredible event.

Nearly 400 investors, owners, executives, and operators from the leading luxury hospitality organizations convened together at the Four Seasons Hotel Miami to collaborate, learn from each other, and make meaningful connections.

Tesla kicked off the event in style with a vehicle showcase, live music, and signature drinks from Jonathan Pogash a.k.a. The Cocktail Guru, during a special Pre-Event Reception in one of Tesla's striking showrooms.



Over the course of two days, we heard from innovators and trendsetters in luxury hospitality discuss a range of topics, from new technologies, investment practices, food trends, wellness hospitality, and more.

World-renowned speaker, author, and television personality, Shane Green served as the Master of Ceremonies

on Day 1 and led an engaging session on the importance of company culture and the customer experience.

Guests were delighted to receive a complimentary copy of his book, "Culture Hacker: Reprogramming Your Employee Experience to Improve Customer Service, Retention, and Performance."





Notable Q&A's included an interview with Tom McAlpin, President and, CEO for Virgin Voyages, who let attendees in on innovations they can expect from the cruise industry.

A speaker favorite was Tom Marchant, owner, and co-founder of The Black Tomato Group who led the session, "Earned Experiences and the Psychology of Travel."

Marchant's session highlighted the industry's rapid increase in people seeking out adventurous experiences that combine a sense of achievement with a back-to-your-explorer-roots sense of intrepidness. "Inspire people through engaging and unique travel experiences," he says.



Andrea Werbel — Founder & Managing Director of Parasol Marketing — interviewed Ellis O'Connor, Co-President & Asset Manager for MSD Hospitality.

During their discussion, O'Connor highlighted the benefits of luxury hotels partnering with high-end retail brands, using the recent partnership between Vilebrequin and the Fairmont Miramar as a key example of how partnerships amplify the guest experience and elevate both the hotel and retail brand.

A notable panel session of the day was "Hotel Development in a Competitive Market," which covered growth strategies, key areas of development, trends to watch, and challenges hoteliers are facing over the next 5 years.

Presented by Phil Keb (Executive Vice President, Gencom), Michel Ducamp (Chief Operating Officer, The Adelphi Saratoga Springs), David Israel (Senior Vice President, hotelAVE), and Robert Gaymer-Jones (Chief Executive Officer at Blue Horse Hotel Management Company). Moderated by Mathew Evins (CEO & Chairman, EVINS Communications).

Day 1 wrapped up with our back-to-back, Luxury Hospitality Showcase and Miami Nights Cocktail Reception, complete with networking opportunities, a Latin Jazz Band, gourmet taco bar, signature cocktails, and plenty of fun!

Panel sessions continued on Day 2 with "F&B and Culinary Experiences that Define Brands," as a crowd favorite.

This culinary panel was led by Jason Bangerter (Executive Chef - Langdon Hall Country House Hotel, representing Relais & Châteaux), Scott Gerber (Principal & CEO, Gerber Group), Sam Gelin (Founder, MADE Hotel), and Pamela Llonin (Associate Director of Sales, Marquis Los Cabos). Moderated by Christian Glauser-Benz (Vice President of Development, Dream Hotels).



This panel discussed the connection between hospitality and gastronomy, farm to table philosophy, and how cuisine is central to the travel experience.

In between sessions, attendees were surprised with raffles including prizes such as a Wolverine Electric Scooter from Landtrike, a European Luxury Bike from Materia Bikes, a custom Soundwall installation, and so much more!

Plus, everyone received two gift bags with more than \$300 worth of swag courtesy of Vilebrequin & ESPEROS.

INSPIRE SUMMIT '17 was a big success and the ILHA is grateful for the continued support of our conference sponsors, exhibitors, and attendees — we couldn't have done it without you!

We'll see you next year in Las Vegas!

Missed out on the fun? This year was sold out, next year will be too! Register today and lock in an Early Bird rate at www.luxuryhotelassociation.com.

For a different take on this year's conference, check out the conference Twitter feed at #ilhasummit and make sure to 'Like' us on Facebook!