Our second selection of Meet the Hotel General Managers is Michael Musarra. One of the newest GM’s in the Downtown San Jose area. The Fairmont Hotel San Jose is still one of the few providing their Guests with the “Ultimate Guest Services” by having a Concierge to assist them with their personal needs at all times.

Fairmont San Jose, an 805 room luxury hotel in the heart of Silicon Valley, is proud to announce the appointment of Michael Musarra as General Manager. Musarra, who brings over 25 years of domestic and international hospitality experience to the position, officially began his new appointment on October 19, 2015.

During his most recent three year tenure as General Manager at Fairmont Dallas, Musarra oversaw the performance and operations of the 545 room luxury property located in the Dallas Arts District. Prior to this post, Musarra spent two years at the iconic Fairmont San Francisco, atop nob hill, as Hotel Manager.

Musarra began his career with storied Fairmont Hotels & Resorts in 2008 as Complex Director of Operations at Fairmont Acapulco Princess and Fairmont Pierre Marques, Acapulco, Mexico.

“It is a great pleasure to welcome Michael back to Northern California and the California portfolio of luxury hotels,” notes Thomas Klein, Regional Vice President & General Manager Fairmont San Francisco. “His years of wide-ranging experience in the hospitality industry, extensive food and beverage knowledge and proven leadership abilities at four of Fairmont’s prestigious properties, are tremendous assets to Fairmont San Jose and Silicon Valley.”

Musarra began his career in Food & Beverage at the Willard InterContinental and then with Hyatt Hotels in Washington D.C. where he held progressive management positions in Food & Beverage. He later moved to Lyon, France in 1994 to develop a small country inn and restaurant, Le Bancillon, as Proprietor and Restaurant Manager.

His career further advanced in 1997 when he joined Starwood Hotels & Resorts as Director of Food & Beverage at the Westin Waltham, Boston. During his 10 year tenure he held a number of progressive executive positions prior to joining Fairmont Hotels & Resorts.

Musarra studied international business at the University of Miami and holds a Bachelor of Science in business administration from New Hampshire College. He completed certifications from Cornell University in revenue management and strategic hospitality. In 2013 he graduated from The Leadership Arts Institute in Dallas, Texas. Musarra is multilingual in English, Spanish and French.

In his new position at San Jose’s premier luxury hotel, Musarra will manage a team of over 500 colleagues. He plans to focus on further developing the hotel’s Food & Beverage outlets, supporting local environmental sustainability initiatives, driving city-wide efforts that continue to strengthen downtown San Jose and partnering with organizations to promote San Jose as a leading business hub.
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(NOMINATIONS AND BALLOTS
TO FOLLOW...............!!!)

Dining with Bella

Vintage Wine Merchants
One of my favorite places to spend a Sunday afternoon is Vintage Wine Merchants in Santana Row. A few years ago I signed up for one of the wine club offerings. Basically, we pay a monthly fee and each month we pick up two cellar-worthy wines. As I started going month over month, I found that it was really a good time to enjoy some wine, a nice cheese platter and catch up on my week and plan activities. Along with your wine selections you enjoy a free glass while you watch people stroll past.

The people behind the counter are super friendly and very knowledgeable. They do have events, so check the calendar, you can't go wrong.

VIVA – Los Gatos
Billing itself as an Upscale New American fare focusing on organic ingredients restaurant, Viva is a fun neighborhood type of place to go for drinks or dinner and drinks. Everyone is super friendly and you can tell it's a place for the locals to gather by how many times you hear a patron called by name. You should definitely try the Tempura Green Beans as an appetizer. It comes with a delightful dipping sauce. I have never had a bad meal at this restaurant and the prices are reasonable. I have never seen the place empty. Be aware though, that it is right next door to Whole Foods and parking can be a challenge.

Happy Hour goes from 3:30 to 6:30 and there is a burger on the menu I absolutely love.

CHIAO BELLA!
JANUARY 2016 CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS:
Here are just a few of the events going on this month, selected by Discover Silicon Valley magazine. (www.dineshopplay.com/events_main)

A WINTER BLAST OF HOT JAZZ… The San Jose Jazz Winter Fest (Feb 25-Mar 8) kicks off 2016 with a compact concert series featuring over 25 shows showcasing jazz, Latin, blues, R&B, New Orleans and more. A diverse and ambitious lineup of leading edge artists and jazz giants in February includes Grammy-winning saxophonist-composer John Scofield and equally lauded guitarist-composer Joe Lovano (2/27), as well as the foremost jazz violinist of her generation, Regina Carter (2/28). (For locations and a full schedule visit www.sanjosejazz.org)

CELEBRATE THE CHINESE NEW YEAR… Ring in the Year of the Monkey at the annual Vietnamese Tet Festival (Feb 13-14), a local tradition featuring games, a parade, food, live music and entertainment. Sat-Sun, 10am-9pm. (Santa Clara: County Fairgrounds, 344 Tully Rd.; 408/494-3247)

BOTTOMS UP… J. Lohr Winery hosts a variety of events every month for the oenophile. In February, partake of a special flight of four wines paired with gourmet cheeses at the Wine & Cheese Friday Perfect Pairings (2/5, 12, 19 & 26; 5:30pm); enjoy a Valentine’s Day Dinner, a gourmet multi-course, wine-paired dinner (2/13, 7pm; 2/14, 6pm); or take part in the Wine Descriptor Seminar, an educational seminar to train your palate and improve your wine vocabulary (2/24; 5:30pm). (San Jose: J. Lohr San Jose Wine Center, 1000 Lenzen Ave.; 408/918-2176)

HOOKING UP WITH THE SECOND CITY … Chicago’s legendary sketch and improv comedy theatre troupe, the Second City presents a hilarious new program (Feb 25) making mirth out of missed connections, girl’s night out adventures, and all of the crazy things we do for love. 7:30pm. (Saratoga: Montalvo Arts Center, 15400 Montalvo Rd.; 408/961-5800)

BALLEET BUZZ… The ballet world is talking about Silicon Valley Ballet. See what the buzz is about with this trio of works selected by Artistic Director José Manuel Carreño that showcases the great versatility and impressive range of this ballet company. Minus 16 is a thrilling exploration of the human experience featuring an eclectic score ranging from Dean Martin to mambo; Balanchine’s Who Cares? is homage to Manhattan danced to the songs of Gershwin; and Prism uses Keith Jarrett’s Köln Concert as its musical inspiration. Performance runs Feb 19-21. Fri-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 1:30pm. (San Jose: Center for the Performing Arts, 255 Almaden Ave.; 408/288-2800)

ASIAN ART THAT PUSHES BOUNDARIES… In her magical, room-sized animations, world-renowned Japanese artist Tabaimo probes the fantastical depths of the unconscious and gives shape to the uncertainties that can haunt contemporary experience. The first major museum exhibition in the U.S. of her work, New Stories from the Edge of Asia: Tabaimo: Her Room (Feb 6-Aug 21) features three video animations, as well as eighteen scroll-like ink drawings and new, site-specific wall drawings made exclusively for this exhibition. Tues-Sun, 11-5. (San Jose: 110 S. Market St.; 408/294-2787)

THE TALE OF A TEMPTRESS… A riveting drama of love and jealousy, filled with famously alluring melodies and captivating dances, Carmen (Feb 13-28) is one of the world’s most popular operas. With dazzling bursts of color, Opera San Jose’s thrilling production brings the sights and sounds of Seville to life, while Bizet’s immortal score overflows with one delight after another. Sung in French with English supertitles. Thurs-Sat, 8pm; Sun, 3pm. (San Jose: California Theatre, 345 S. 1st St.; 408/437-4450)
Customers. 12 tips to keep them coming back.

You are in a noble profession if you work in the hospitality industry. Although demanding and sometimes thankless, think about this; you have the power to turn a customer’s experience into one-to-remember, or one-to-forget.

To be noticed and to succeed in this industry, effort and attitude are essential. Extra touches like, using a polite tone, exhibiting a calm demeanor, always having a pleasant expression, finding ways to be helpful, and maintaining a clean and neat appearance are key.

Performing your duties is not enough. For example: Restaurant Scenario 1: It’s how you place the plate in front of the guest. Picture this: The server appears without a word. Their demeanor is quick, curt and expressionless. They wipe the sweat from their face as they attempt to squeeze the plate in front of you, only to slam it down. And, without a word, they walk away.

Restaurant Scenario 2: With a little “effort” and “attitude adjustment” it would look like this: The server calmly approaches the table; with a pleasant expression and tone they give you a moment to lean back making room for them to gently place the plate in front of you. They complete the interaction by adding a simple phrase like, “Enjoy.” or “Please let me know if you need anything.”

Which experience would encourage you to return? Here are 12 tips to encourage repeat customers:

1. Stand up straight: don’t leaning against handrails, sit on steps, or keep your hands in your pockets. (Unless you are outdoor in cold weather.)

2. Check your clothing throughout the day. Are you tucked in? Is there a stain or rip? Make sure you look put together, clean, and neat.

3. Don’t get caught checking your cell phone, smoking, or adjusting your body parts.

4. Drop the conversation with coworkers as soon as you see a customer approaching. If you must complete the “work-related” conversation, be sure to acknowledge the customer with a smile, informing them that you will be with them shortly.

5. Keep coworker conversations professional; use a low and calm voice, maintain a business-expression, and keep it brief.

6. Never correct or embarrass a staff member in front of others. If there’s a problem, schedule a time to discuss it privately.

7. Make eye contact with the customer. Thanking them for their stay as your head is buried in their trunk does not count.

8. Always have a pleasant facial expression; the essence of your job is to make others feel welcome.

9. Do not roll your eyes after dealing with a demanding customer. They could easily turn around and catch you, so could your boss or another customer.

10. Dealing with a rude customer is unpleasant. Some customers will never be pleased. Before you explode, seek assistance.

11. Unless you are leading the way, always step aside allowing the customer to pass.


Rosalinda Randall is a Civility and Etiquette Consultant. She has been spreading workplace civility for over fifteen years through her workshops, speaking engagements, television and radio interviews, articles and most recently, her book, Don’t Burp in the Boardroom – Your Guide to Handling Uncommonly Common Workplace Dilemmas.

Rosalinda simplifies how civility and etiquette play a role in the workplace and how easy it is to apply to any situation. Revive your workplace atmosphere. Enhance your customers’ experience.

E: rosalinda@rosalindarandall.com
T: 650.871.6200
W: rosalindarandall.com
Tw: @rosalindatweets
FB: Rosalinda Randall
Millennials vs. The Millennial Mindset

The industry has it wrong. It's not younger people forcing industry change, all of us still want the same thing. Here's what we all brought to you by www.hotelinteractive.com

Your customer is changing and it's all technology's fault. And looking out into the distant and not so distant future, tomorrow's technology is morphing the way we need to think about tomorrow's hotel business today. But not in the way you think.

It's more than just the changing nature of technology, there's a massive societal shift occurring where people interact with technology in wholly different ways. And it's confusing people and causing folks to go astray when thinking about the future of hospitality.

Remember the thinking behind the birth and explosion of so-called lifestyle hotels? The entire movement was based on psychographics, the idea people have a specific perception of themselves and desire specific things and experiences based on an emotional point of view. As a business we realized pigeonholing someone into a specific set of needs based on age, sex or race was folly. It worked.

The notion of appealing to someone's desires and personality characteristics is absolutely the right way to approach the future. However, people are forgetting this rational approach to hospitality and are going gaga over the millennial generation in a way we've never seen before with previous age groups.

Yes, this demographic is important to hospitality. Yes, this group will one day make up the majority of trips taken. But that is not today. Focusing all efforts on wooing a group of young people and thinking they are all the same while simultaneously pushing older generations to the side is a dangerous move distracting lodging executives from the ultimate truth we should all be considering; there's a massive change in the way ALL people want to interact with the world.

Call it the Millennial Mindset, a better way to filter ideas for your hotel. Technology is changing all of us, it's just younger people, with their millennial-aged spongy brains, soak up learning easier. That makes them adapt newer technologies quicker even as they continue to have the same inherent needs as everyone else.

That's why younger folks are called 'digital natives', they grew up in a world where the internet was omnipresent. So naturally they relate to technology in a way older 'digital immigrants' do not. Folks born before the internet had to learn how to use it rather than it just being the norm.

When I was a kid the same phenomenon was at play. My grandparents could not fathom how to use the latest in technology, those bulky desktop computers with monochrome screen. But I figured it all out easily. That's because I was a new person ready to absorb all I could, and my grandparents, well, I think everyone gets to a point in life where they just don't want to take the time to learn a new technology.

Now that doesn't mean they possessed a different set of human characteristics than me when it came to their desires for a hotel experience. We all wanted rooms with the latest technology - Color TV! Air cooled rooms! HBO! -- and today's hotel guest is the same way; technology is omnipresent. So naturally they relate to technology in a way older 'digital natives' do not. Folks born before the internet had to learn how to use it rather than it just being the norm.

Here's what we ALL want. A clean, comfortable hotel experience that caters to our innate desires to be recognized as individuals while we connect with others. Technology enables those things to happen more easily, but to think Millennials are a totally alien species to the rest of us belies the obvious truth and sets us up to ignore those Gen Xers and Baby Boomers that are responsible for nearly all the industry's profits. Plus when Millennials settle down and have kids and mortgage they'll be a lot more like us then they realize.

That's why focusing on the Millennial Mindset is the right approach. In 2015 we all want internet access, to be social in the lobby, and have great experiences too we can share with our friends - either online or in person. Americans have an incredible fascination with internet access, to be social in the lobby, and have great experiences too we can share with our friends - either online or in person. Americans have an incredible fascination with internet access, to be social in the lobby, and have great experiences too we can share with our friends - either online or in person.

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Guess what, the people filling those hotel bars and restaurants weren't Millennials. They were people just like you and me genetically programmed to be social beings. The only real difference is today's grandma and grandpa want to be social and talk to the person they're seated next to, while millennials appear to be social using that smartphone. But guess what? Both those types of people want to buy your food, drink your cocktails and sleep in a comfy bed.

So let's keep on keeping on with designing new brands and creating exciting jaw dropping hotel elements. But it should be done through the lens of psychographics and not demographics. To fully maximize your hotel's profit potential we mustn't get distracted by the notion this emerging generation is anything new and special.

To ignore everyone for the sake of solely capturing the millennial dollar is a dangerous move that could leave your hotel unoccupied. Well, except maybe for those two broke kids in the lobby's corner posting to social media about your empty hotel.
International Service out of SJC:

To Beijing, China – Ongoing service on Hainan Airlines
To Cabo San Lucas, Mexico - Ongoing service on Alaska Airlines
To Guadalajara, Mexico - Ongoing service on Alaska Airlines and Volaris
To Tokyo, Japan - Ongoing service on ANA
To Frankfurt, Germany - Service begins April 29 on Lufthansa
To London, England - Service begins May 4 on British Airways
To Vancouver, British Columbia - Service begins May 9 on Air Canada

Source: San Jose International Airport; flysanjose.com

Film fun: CINEQUEST 2016 – the best two weeks of the year for Silicon Valley film-goers – takes place

March 1-13. Voted Best Film Festival by USA Today readers, CINEQUEST connects creators, innovators and audiences by showcasing premier films, renowned and emerging artists and revolutionary technology.

Each year, 100,000 people attend the screenings and pre- and after-parties scattered throughout downtown. The event includes more than 90 world and U.S. premieres, and 700-plus film participants from more than 50 countries.

The 2016 schedule was announced Jan. 27. The theme is “unite.” Visit cinequest.org to see who will be honored with the Maverick Award, which recognizes bold, visionary and creative forces, and Maverick Spirit Awards.
February 4th, 6-9p.m.
This is the largest Super Bowl party on Santana Row!

And it’s in the Bay Area. Join us as we celebrate with The Beer Blitz, sponsored by Bud Light. Sip local craft brews inside of select shops and restaurants at Santana Row from 6pm-9pm on Thursday, February 4th. Tickets are $100 and include unlimited beer tastings, a souvenir pint glass and gift bags with Big Game merchandise. Check-in begins at 5pm in Santana Row Park. Tickets are limited and can be purchased online at www.TheBeerWalk.com.

Complimentary Shuttles from the Fairmont & Hilton
February 5th & 6th
Santana Row is offering complimentary round-trip shuttle service from The Fairmont San Jose and Hilton San Jose hotels to and from Santana Row on Friday, February 5, 2016 and Saturday, February 6, 2016. The shuttle service will begin at 11 a.m. each day in front of each hotel. The shuttles will run continuously all day to and from Santana Row, with the last shuttle departing each hotel at approximately 6:45 p.m. The shuttle will drop guests off at Santana Row, the premier shopping and dining destination less than 5 miles away. The shuttle will depart from the same location as you were dropped off at. The shuttle will pick-up at each hotel and Santana Row approximately every 45 minutes.

Roundtrip Shuttle to Levi’s Stadium:
Super Bowl Sunday, February 7th: Departing Santana Row at 1p.m.
Enjoy a round-trip shuttle from Santana Row to Levi’s Stadium! Your $40 ticket includes round-trip transportation, designated parking at Santana Row and exclusive shopping & dining incentives.
Tickets can be purchased at www.SantaRow.com.

Wine Stroll Benefitting the American Heart Association
February 18th, 6-9p.m.
In celebration of Heart Month, Santana Row is partnering with the American Heart Association and Go Red for Women to host the Annual Wine & Dine Around. More than a dozen Santana Row shops and restaurants will host exclusive in-store events featuring complimentary wine tastings. Tickets are $40 and include wine tastings, lite bites, a signature Santana Row wine glass and more! Tickets are available online and inside the Santana Row Concierge Center. For more information please contact the Santana Row Concierge, 408.551.4611. Must be 21 years or older to attend.

408K Race to The Row
March 6th
Show your 408 pride and join the fifth annual 8k Race to The Row from downtown San Jose, benefiting The Pat Tillman Foundation. The event starts at 8am at SAP Center in Downtown San Jose and the finish line is at Santana Row. Don’t miss the famous Mariachi Mile! Enjoy exciting post-race activities and delicious brunches at Santana Row after the race.
Registration is open now at the www.the408k.com

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Film and Photography

The organizers may film and photograph the event. These materials will be used online and offline to promote Silicon Valley Concierge Association and to advertise future events. By attending the event you agree to appear in such films and photographs.

SVCA Membership

SVCA Student
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SVCA - Membership
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Saratoga, CA 95070-0545

Email: svca_membership.com

Membership includes One complementary beverage and raffle coupon for each member and one guest upon check-in at applicable events.

PayPal Now Available for SVCA Membership

www.siliconvalleyconcierge.com

Photos Taken at SVCA Events: