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Talking With . . .



PETER KACHERIS

56, former general manager of the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin Resort and the recently hired managing director of Hilton Hotels Corp.'s partially built Bonnet Creek resort, which will include a 1,000-room Hilton and the first Waldorf-Astoria outside New York City. He spoke recently with Sentinel staff writer Sara K. Clarke.

'Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity'

Question: You've run several prominent hotels here in Central Florida. Can you tell us about those jobs?

Answer: My first introduction to Central Florida was in 2000, when I went to the Orlando World Center Marriott as the hotel manager. I had the privilege of being there for six and a half years and was in charge of the operations of the entire property and was also the representative for the Central Florida Hotel and Lodging Association for the property . . . I took an opportunity at the Grande Lakes property for a short time as the general manager at the J.W. [Marriott]. It was a terrific job and a great opportunity. But in the midst of it all, the general manager at the Swan and Dolphin Hotel was leaving and it was a wonderful opportunity to move into a different role with a different company. So after 28 years with Marriott, I took that leap of faith and went and worked for Starwood hotels.

Q: What will your responsibilities be as managing director of The Waldorf-Astoria

Orlando and the Hilton Orlando Bonnet Creek?

A: I will be responsible for all the management and operation of the entire facility. We will be having a general manager at the Hilton and a general manager at The Waldorf-Astoria and a director of golf that will report directly to me.

Q: What attracted you to the job?

A: I just think it's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in a hotel mecca such as Orlando to be opening and creating the beginnings of the first Waldorf-Astoria to be built outside of New York City and just a wonderful project. It's a first-class, premiere project on every single thing they're doing.

Q: How do you think your past experiences in Central Florida will help you?

A: The first thing that makes me feel very good is the fact that we are going to be hiring a lot of people in what appears to be a very difficult year coming up. . . . We will be hiring the majority of our people

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TALKING

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from the Central Florida area and its vast hotel community. Second of all, I think I have the ability to have worked two properties that have two hotels on them. So I already get to see how that dynamic works between the two properties, in two different settings as a leader.

Q: You've worked for Marriott, Starwood and now Hilton. Has it been difficult to transition between the hotel brands?

A: No. Actually I find it somewhat exciting to see the different things that each of the brands are noted for and what they're doing . . . You still maintain your friendship with other people and you understand how the different brands work. But every one of them is unique.

Q: How do you choose a hotel when you travel personally?

A: By the reason for the destination. As such, I have sons that are in rowing and when we go to a rowing event, I need a room and I just need it clean and comfortable. When we go on a family vacation though, I want something with full service that I can get all the things that I like to do: to play golf, to have spa treatments, to do room service,

have wonderful fun restaurants to go to. So it depends on the event that you're going to.

Q: The Waldorf Astoria, as you mentioned, is going to be the first one built outside Park Avenue in New York. How do you feel about living up to such a historic property?

A: There are a lot of things that we're going to bring to this property that we've done in New York for many years. And then I think we're going to add a dimension of it to be consistent with things that people are looking for in Florida. So I look at it as a great opportunity to create this together . . . There are literally hundreds of people that will be working with me throughout the organization to make sure that this is implemented correctly.

Q: You've held leadership positions with the local hoteliers association, CFHLA. Do you see yourself working with other Orlando hoteliers as the managing director of this project?

A: Well, it's interesting; right now, I think we're under extreme financial pressure in most of the hotels. And a lot of people have had to lay off their staffs, and I'm getting notes every day right now from different general managers throughout the area of people that they did not want to lay off and great employees that they would like me to consider . . . I think it's indicative of the group of

people that we have here managing these hotels. While we compete extensively and we work very hard to make our individual properties successful, we're also fellow hoteliers and we're friends.

This report has been edited for space considerations. For more of the interview, go to OrlandoSentinel.com and click on Business.

Dividends


Stock	Amount	Record date	Payable date
TUESDAY DIVIDENDS DECLARED			
IRREGULAR			
Banco Bradesco z	.0056	1-7	2-6
z-approx. amount per ADS or ADR.			
REGULAR			
Camden Nat ^l 6d	Q .25	1-15	1-30
Kimco Rily	Q .44	1-2	1-15
Penn West Energy g	M .34	12-31	1-15

g-payable in Canadian funds.

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