

# *The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd.*

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## **THE LEADING HOTELS OF THE WORLD, LTD.: A BRIEF HISTORY**

The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. is the prestigious luxury hospitality organization representing more than 450 of the world's finest hotels, resorts and spas. Headquartered in New York City, the company maintains a network of 22 regional offices in key cities around the world.

The company was established in 1928 by a group of influential and forward-thinking European hoteliers. With 38 initial members, among them Hotel Negresco in Nice, the Mena House in Cairo and King David Hotel in Jerusalem, the organization was initially known as "The Luxury Hotels of Europe and Egypt". Recognizing the importance of establishing direct contact with the traveling public and travel agencies in the North American market, the founders opened an office in New York, calling this satellite operation "Hotel Representative, Inc." – or HRI.

By the end of the 1960s, HRI had grown to represent 70 hotels – all of which were in Europe. Early in 1971, the board of directors and management of The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. decided to expand the scope of the organization to include new members from around the globe, to meet the demands of the increased numbers of international luxury travelers. Hotel membership continued to grow through the next two decades, and with it, the need for the establishment of regional offices. By the end of the 1980s, there were 235 Leading Hotels of the World, serviced through offices in the United States, Europe, Asia, Australia and Latin America.

Capitalizing on the strength of the Leading brand, the company introduced its first brand extension – The Leading Small Hotels of the World – in 1999. It also established several joint-venture companies and ancillary businesses: Leading Group Sales, Leading Quality Assurance, Leading Financial Services, Leading Interactive Reservations, Leading Hotel Schools of the World, Leading Products and Services Network, Leading By Design, The Leading Residences of the World, and Leading Insurance Services.

Requirements for becoming a member of The Leading Hotels of the World stipulate that a hotel must meet exacting standards of excellence in all areas affecting guest comfort, convenience and well being. The organization does not solicit new members; hotels must apply for inclusion. Upon successful completion of a rigorous application and inspection process, only the most eminent hotels are accepted for admission. Each member hotel is periodically re-inspected to ensure strict adherence to the company's quality standards. Each year, The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. publishes a Directory of its member hotels, which is only one of the company's marketing endeavors. Additional services provided by the organization include extensive sales and promotional activities, advertising and public relations support, and an array of special programs for member hotels and their guests.

Mr. Jean-Jacques Gauer, general manager of the Lausanne Palace & Spa, in Lausanne, Switzerland, is the chairman of Hotel Representative, A.G., the parent company of The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd. Mr. Theodore Teng is president and chief executive officer of The Leading Hotels of the World, Ltd.