

# Hotel Business

THE NEWSPAPER FOR LODGING DECISION MAKERS

ICD Publications

VOL. 15 NO. 23 DECEMBER 7-20, 2006

## BRIEFS

### BW names Helm new chairman

Best Western International has named Charles Helm as chairman of its membership association, which represents 4,200 hotels in 80 countries. Helm, who co-owns and operates the Best Western Crown Colony Inn & Suites in Lufkin, TX, began his one-year term as chairman this month. Also appointed to the board were Roman Jaworowicz, vice chairman, and David Francis, secretary/treasurer.

### Lexington boosts portfolio

The Lexington Collection has added the Hudson Valley Resort in Kerhonskon, NY, to its portfolio. The 60-year-old resort is now known as the Lexington at Hudson Valley Resort. Lexington also recently added the Hope Lake Lodge in Cortland, NY, and a former Holiday Inn in Montgomery, AL.

### DiamondRock adds two hotels

DiamondRock Hospitality Co. has agreed to buy two Renaissance hotels for \$237.5 million. DiamondRock projects that the hotels, the 492-room Renaissance Austin Hotel and the 521-room Renaissance Waverly Atlanta Hotel, will deliver \$3 million in net income in 2007.

## Four Seasons may be poised to go private 'Sharp' focus would be intact



BY BRUCE SERLEN

TORONTO—Isadore Sharp's move, announced last month, to take publicly-traded Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts private comes at a propitious time in the global lodging industry on two counts. First, there's an abundance of private equity money available at the moment for the right investment. Secondly, the lodging industry is in the midst of a strong up-cycle that's been particularly beneficial to the luxury tier where Four Seasons has long been a dominant player.

continued on page 6

Four Seasons properties, such as the 397-room Four Seasons Resort and Club at Las Colinas in Dallas, may soon become part of a private company.

## Choice opts for brand-centric approach

Goal is greater definition



Joseph Squeri  
Choice president and COO

BY CHRISTOPHER OSTROWSKI

SILVER SPRING, MD— Considering it now possesses the hotel industry's largest brand family with 10 members, Choice Hotels International, Inc.'s latest move toward a brand-centric organizational structure seems to be welcome news for its franchisees that seek greater focus on and awareness for their individual flags, which are typically marketed to the public as one tightknit brand family. But while greater brand definition is certainly one of the primary goals of this operational

continued on page 27

## Hotel industry's momentum marked by recent IH/M&RS

STAFF REPORT

NEW YORK— The mood was decidedly upbeat at this year's International Hotel/Motel & Restaurant Show (IH/M&RS), which took place here last month at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. The industry's continuing momentum was evident at the event, which attracted more than 35,000 attendees, an increase of more than 7% over last year, according to show operator George Little Management.

Expectations for continued good times across the industry were voiced by a cross-section of hospitality executives

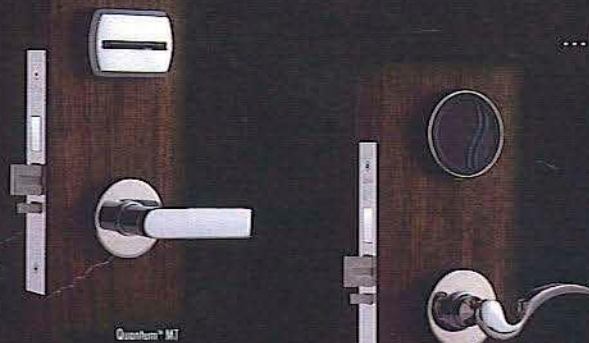
continued on page 10

◆ New AH&LA Chairman— Story begins on p. 3

IH/M&RS  
ON THE  
SCENE

Robust technology  
can be beautiful!

[www.hotelbusiness.com/readerservice](http://www.hotelbusiness.com/readerservice)  
For more information, use ad #114



... minimalist design  
... impeccable engineering

**Saflok**  
A member of the KABA Group

Their Security... Your Control

Offices located worldwide.

For product information:  
Toll-free - 877.272.3545  
Customer service - 800.999.6213  
[www.Saflok.com](http://www.Saflok.com)

QUANTUM

Quantum® M10

© 2006 SAFLOK, all rights reserved. Patent pending.

# Microsoft co-founder's tech savvy brought to new Pan Pacific Seattle

BY CHRISTOPHER OSTROWSKI

SEATTLE—Considering it may be the nation's pre-eminent technology industry hotbed, it is no coincidence that Seattle is also becoming well known for its collection of high-tech hotels that continue to emerge along its skyline. Now representing

the latest incarnation of this market-specific trend is the Pan Pacific Seattle, which has officially opened its doors here with the promise of providing a luxury high-touch, high-tech and high-style environment to its tech-savvy guests.

The hotel features 160 guestrooms, 261 condominiums

and what has become the hallmark of all newly built high-tech hotels—a fully converged Internet protocol-based infrastructure. The \$200-million Pan Pacific Seattle is the product of investment firm Vulcan Inc., which is—again, not-so-coincidentally—owned by Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. Conse-

quently, beyond the Cisco Systems and CAT6-based infrastructure, numerous guest- and operations-focused technologies costing a total of more than \$1.3 million were deployed at the property by Vulcan in conjunction with the hotel's operator, Pan Pacific Hotels and Resorts, which simply sought to utilize the latest

in technology as a means toward better service and efficiency.

"With technology there's always more that you can do, but of course some of it can become over-the-top or ridiculous, so for the most part we're pretty happy with the way this project has turned out," reflected Mark Fancourt, the corporate director of information technology at Singapore-based Pan Pacific. "There are still a few more things we will do [at the hotel], and the staff has a fairly steep learning curve in getting in the swing of operating all of the software-based equipment, but we would consider this hotel to be the blueprint for our company's properties in the future."

"I should also give credit to Vulcan because their own technology team had a huge part to play in the project," he added. "They have some of the most tech-savvy people I've met in my entire working career."

Such a combination of talent has produced a hotel that is direct competition for the other

## "Amazing Internet access – our guests love it!"

"Affordable, reliable, and simple. That's how I describe our high-speed Internet access system from Telkonet. I wanted a system that could be installed without rewiring or remodeling the rooms, and the Telkonet iWire System™ did just that, and more. We had Internet access within a week for all three properties!

The system works extremely well – there's no downtime, no interruptions, and it's so simple to get online. It's worked flawlessly for over two years. Our guests love the flexibility – they simply plug into any outlet anywhere for Internet access – in their rooms, in the lobby, even in the bar. I am just amazed by how well Telkonet's system works!"

**Barry Eagle, Area Director of Sales and Marketing, Hilton Wilmington Riverside, Wilmington, North Carolina**



The Pan Pacific Seattle offers the latest in in-room entertainment.

most recent high-tech luxury addition to Seattle, Hotel 1000, which opened in June to similar fanfare. However, regardless of the many technology bells and whistles the two hotels have in common, Fancourt maintained that at the Pan Pacific Seattle, each technology element begins and ends with functionality.

"There are very much two aspects to this property from a technology standpoint—the guest-focused aspect and the operational-focused aspect," he said. "Now, I think there is probably more to the operational side of it all than the guest-rooms because our position is we believe technology should be driving efficiencies for us. So some of the tools we've deployed here focus specifically on that. And one of the main things we talked

 **Telkonet**

866-312-6690 | [www.telkonet.com](http://www.telkonet.com)

Call for an authorized reseller near you.

about was moving from a point-of-sale model to a point-of-service model, meaning if a guest is on one side of the lobby, why can't we use technology to go and service the guest, instead of requiring the guest to go to our service touch point?"

As an example of this technology-generating service level that's intrinsic at the property, Fancourt said that all employees are supplied with PDA-based devices or soft phones that enable them to be contacted by any other employee anywhere on the property at any time. Such an arrangement, in conjunction with a task management system, creates a high level of service and efficiency, according to Fancourt, because such simple guest requests as extra towels are monitored until completion.

"Everything is tracked and when a job is created, we know when someone received the job, how long it takes and whether the job is done," he said. "When a job is acknowledged, that information goes back to our center, which automatically monitors the job. If, for whatever reason, someone acknowledges a job, but doesn't complete it, the job will escalate within the system in importance."

Looking further into the Pan Pacific Seattle's back-of-the-house technology structure, property management, customer relationship management and sales and catering are all handled by Micros Systems, Inc.'s suite of enterprise-level products, which are all integrated, Fancourt said. In addition, he noted that all hotel staff members are trained in a "non-silo" work format, meaning most employees are trained on all technology applications and not just ones applicable to an individual.

Meanwhile, the hotel's guest-focused technologies mostly center on the guestrooms, which feature highly secure wired and wireless high-speed Internet access; Bartech mini-bar systems; Avaya voice over IP phones; 36-inch, LCD televisions from LG Electronics with DVD players; and KoolConnect's Intrigue high-definition in-room entertainment systems, which are IPTV-based.

When it comes to the in-room entertainment system, Fancourt said that Intrigue was chosen because it was customizable. "We believe that the guestroom is a Pan Pacific product and so, in searching for a vendor, the key focus point was we wanted the TV portal to ultimately be-

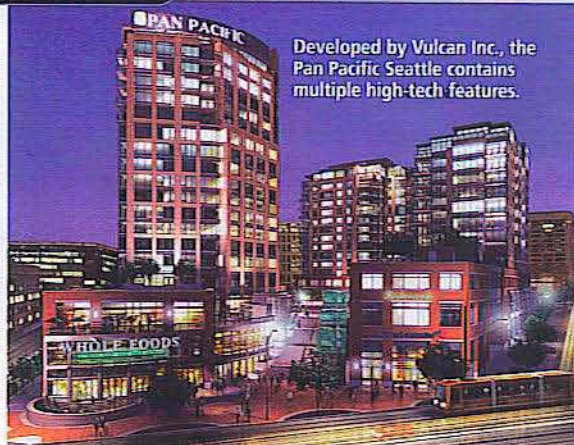
long to us," he explained.

The Intrigue system specifically offers HD video-on-demand movies, TV-based text messaging, virtual concierge services, a "moods" feature that's based on the display of soothing digital art and music, access to World Radio Content and docking stations for iPods and other personal media devices.

While guests, not to mention staff, get accustomed to such technological amenities and de-

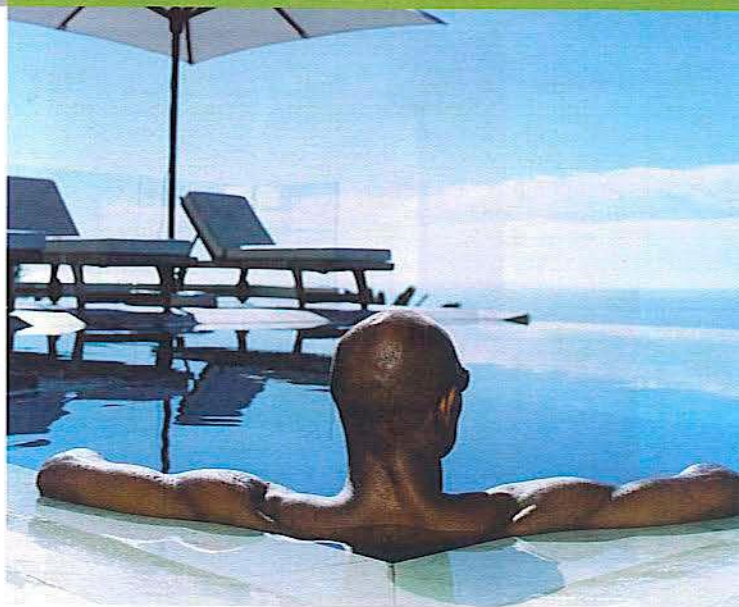
vices at the hotel, Fancourt is already planning the property's next technology leap, which will involve the utilization of PDAs for guest check-in. But, as is the case with the rest of the property's technological offerings, Fancourt asserted that this next high-tech deployment will be carried out with only service, efficiency and functionality in mind.

"I think technology is a wonderful thing," he said, "but if you can't use it, it's pointless." **HB**



Developed by Vulcan Inc., the Pan Pacific Seattle contains multiple high-tech features.

No matter how nice the setting,  
nothing can redeem a  
meeting if bandwidth  
starts to fray.



### Presenting Conference Services, from iBAHN.

Fact: You can win conference business on amenities and location, but you can lose it—disastrously—if the meeting's technical requirements aren't up to snuff.

That's where iBAHN, the worldwide leader in hospitality broadband services, comes in. Not only do we provide the secure technology services you require for flawless event execution, we deliver the kind of steadfast service and expert support that add up to complete peace of mind.

Put an end to frayed nerves by calling  
**800.848.8168** or visiting [www.ibahn.com](http://www.ibahn.com)

  
**iBAHN**