

BOUTIQUE DESIGN'S 2018 WOMEN LEADERS

BRAIN TRUST

What's next for hospitality design? How will the economy fare? What can studio heads do to stop the brain drain that's bleeding talent from this industry? On the following pages, *Boutique Design's* 2018 Power Players: Women Leaders in Hospitality share their insights and success strategies for the year ahead.

BY MARY SCOVIAK

THOUGH THE 12 executives being honored as role models see the hospitality design world's challenges and opportunities through different filters, they're not forecasting any big bumps in the road. No one's predicting a slow-down in consolidation or in the launch of additional brands. The rationale for the latter point: No brand can be one-concept-fits-all at a time when consumers mix and match their preferred hotels depending on the purpose of their trip or their mood of the day. Travelers will continue to seek the "exact" property to satisfy their appetite for a surprise-me experience when they're on vacation or a "don't even make me think about where the light switch" mandate when they travel on business. The answer on whether there's room for the giants and the up-and-comers was a resounding, "yes."

They all stressed the increasing importance of wellbeing as a design driver. Design firms that want to make owners' short lists need to start thinking beyond a little wheat grass here and there to how to actually promote good health with in-room mirror-length screens that stream workouts or find cool bathroom fixtures that work for travelers with mobility issues without sacrificing style. And, they offer best-practice life hacks for staying grounded, trying to find that illusive work/life balance everybody's supposed to want and how they're giving back.

To find out more, get clued in by these influential thought leaders.

2018 BDwest Women Leaders

- Mari Balestrazzi, vice president, Americas design services, Hyatt Hotels Corp.
- Pamela Babey, principal, BAMO
- Sue Firestone, chairman and founder, SFA Design
- Dana Kalczak, vice president, design, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts
- Simone Mayer, chief executive officer & chief creative officer, FOH
- Anu Saxena, senior vice president & global head for Hilton Supply Management (HSM); president of Hilton's Global Group Purchasing Organization

2018 BDNy Women Leaders

- Glyn Aepfel, president and chief executive officer, Glencove Capital
- Cindy Andrews, president, Sunbrite Outdoor Furniture
- Beth Campbell, chief executive officer, Wilson Associates
- Julia Monk, senior principal and director of hospitality design, HOK
- Rachel Rangelov, senior vice president, design and construction, Longview Senior Housing Advisors
- Teri Urovsky, vice president, design and project management, Classic Full-service Brands, Marriott Intl.



GLYN AEPPLE
PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER, GLENCOVE CAPITAL

**WHY THE TIMING'S RIGHT TO INVEST IN A
FLEDGLING HOTEL COMPANY:**

I never intended to invest in a start-up right now, but when I met Cyril Aouizerate, the mastermind behind MOB Hotel [and the maverick who launched and grew Mama Shelter before selling his stake in this irreverent boutique hotel group to AccorHotels in 2014], I "got" his unique, powerful vision. MOB Hotel involves all of the senses in creating an environment rather than just an interior. It offers more than communal space; it brings guests together around shared interests—from cooking to meditation. It's also very much about wellbeing, which is something a lot of other affordable lifestyle concepts miss. For example, its bar-restaurant serves organic produce from local cooperatives, food trucks and gardens. Each hotel has an outdoor cinema where guests can socialize. The lobby has a market with a rotating selection of handmade and locally produced goods. Guests can rent a ukulele or an iPad. They can connect by playing foosball (it's a signature design element) or playing ping pong, or listening to live music. I've always had this entrepreneurial drive to create something different and special. That's why I decided to take the plunge. This is a very long-term hold because it will take years to execute our global strategy. We are expanding in Europe and our first U.S. hotels underway in Los Angeles, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C. And I continue to look for additional investment opportunities.

HOW SHE PLAYS THE BIG BRAND GAME:
Glencove Capital is focused only on investing in distinct independent hotel assets and brands/movements. However, I remain actively involved in branded properties, which is my background. I have more than 30 years of global experience in developing and building hotel brands, raising capital, asset management and investing in hotel companies and assets for global hospitality companies including Marriott Intl., Interstate Hotels & Resorts, Le Méridien Hotels & Resorts, Fairmont Hotels & Resorts, and Loews Hotels & Co. So I know the positive impact the right flag can have for the right asset. I recently joined the board of Concord Hospitality, which I see as an exceptionally strong hotel management company with deep development and ownership roots, and intend to contribute to fueling their growth with the major brands.

HER M&A OUTLOOK:
The hotel giants are focused on expanding the number of brands, especially in the lifestyle sector. Because of that, consolidation will continue. It is hard for the small hotel groups to compete unless they have a very strong advantage, and few do. It's easier to be gobbled up by the big players—as evidenced by a number of recent deals.

**WHY SHE LAUNCHED HER OWN INVESTMENT
ADVISORY FIRM:**
I started Glencove Capital over eight years ago because I saw that the shift in customer travel expectations towards the authentic, distinct experience which I had come to understand first-hand working with André Balazs as a partner and chief investment officer at André Balazs Properties, was becoming a new paradigm. Deciding to go out on my own at the peak of my corporate career was the riskiest thing I've ever done. But, I didn't consider failure as an option. I've sourced, closed and financed real estate investments of over \$2 billion throughout the United States and Europe, and I've invested in all segments of the hotel industry from limited service assets to luxury resorts, across all brands. I have the numbers to show that I know how to deliver strong results to shareholders and investors. Finding investment partners, while never easy, has worked out for me.

**HER ADVICE TO DESIGNERS ON BUILDING THEIR
BUSINESS IN 2019:**
There are more design opportunities in the secondary and tertiary markets. These locales tend to have boring hotel inventory and, thus, more opportunity to be creative. Also, emerging neighbor-



hoods in gateway cities have become interesting for cool new brands, especially with the related economic incentives in place to encourage hotel development of these areas. It's hard to get clarity on how this will play out long term but, in such a frothy market, there continue to be more entrants.

HER TASK LIST:
My goals are a) to continue growing Glencove Capital in this unique focused hospitality segment; and b) to motivate, fund and mentor strong female entrepreneurs through my role as chairman of the advisory board of f843 Capital, a new venture capital firm founded and managed by two exceptional female leaders, Tracy Chadwell and Alison Reyes. That will be a "WOW" for me – Women Optimizing Women!

WHO GLYN AEPPLE IS WHEN SHE'S OFF DUTY:
The Glyn you see is the Glyn you get. It's hard for me to separate my business and personal lives because I'm constantly exploring the extremes of creativity and design. That affects how I see the world and myself. I have no interest in creating my own "brand." I'm in the lifestyle hospitality world and I have my own company. So, I have the freedom to do what I want to do, when I want to do it and with whom. On a more personal note, my dream, when I was young, was to become a pop singer. I do love music, all kinds of music, which is another passion of mine. But alas, I did not have the voice or training to pursue that career! If I had three more hours in the day, I would play the piano, sing and dance more!

COURTESY OF GLENCOVE CAPITAL (AEPPLE); COURTESY OF MOB HOTELS (MOB)