



BLLA Concludes First Digital Summit, 10th Annual StayBoutique Awards

LOS ANGELES (Sept. 22, 2020) -- Hotelier Ian Schrager and Thrive Global Founder and CEO Arianna Huffington were amongst the headliners who shared their hospitality insights with several hundred virtual attendees during the first Digital Summit by the Boutique Lifestyle Leaders Association (BLLA) on Sept. 17 and 18. The summit gathered boutique professionals from across the globe for two days of commerce, culture and art, concluding with the announcement of the winners of BLLA's 10th annual StayBoutique Awards.

Guests attended the conference via BLLA's exclusive summit app available on mobile and desktop, which hosted over 80 speakers via 50 panels and webinars on the topics of investment and leadership from headliners including the U.S. Travel Association, World Travel & Tourism Council, Fauchon Hospitality, EDITION Hotels and Standard International, to name a few. Amid a climate of emerging technologies and changing consumer expectations, the summit embraced the theme 'Dare to Adapt,' emphasizing the diversification and rising popularity of the boutique concept in a challenging year for the travel and hospitality industry. Topics covered all things boutique from true hospitality and fostering loyalty to financing a boutique hotel and valuation perspectives. Attendees are able to access the recordings via the app for seven days following the conference; BLLA members will have extended access to all recordings after logging in to their member portal.

"We exceeded our expectations on all levels for this day-and-a-half all-virtual event," said Frances Kiradjian, Founder and CEO of BLLA. Ariela Kiradjian and her team worked tirelessly to pull this off with no outside assistance. "Besides selecting the best-of-the-best in boutique hospitality brands, investors, owners and founders, the added experiences such as speed-dating and mentor circles made this clearly one of the best events this year as heard directly from the feedback received from speakers, sponsors and attendees. It is truly heartwarming during these special times in our world, to say the least."

In tandem with the summit, BLLA partnered with research firm Metric Centric to create the most up-to-date consumer confidence report for the boutique hospitality sector. The report was shared complimentary with all attendees on Sept. 18. The results reflected findings by McKinsey & Company that travelers are seeking safety and guest experience in their future travels. Those surveyed expressed a focus on cleanliness and a desire for community-oriented authenticity. The Metric Centric survey similarly focused on safety, recreation and leisure.

Founded in 2010, the StayBoutique Awards originally served to recognize leaders of independent hotels globally and the properties themselves. The Awards have evolved to

include other categories such as technology and design, recognizing the most daring efforts in the boutique community with projects that extend the limits of what the sector can do. All winners provide moments that define a cultural experience and a desire for discovery.

“The winners of the 2020 StayBoutique Awards are reinvigorating their respective spaces with novel approaches to marketing, innovative collaborations and by embracing change during an exceedingly difficult time in the world. We are honored to present them with this recognition and acknowledge their winnings virtually this year, while looking forward to future in-person celebrations,” said Kiradjian.

BLLA is pleased to present the winners for the 2020 StayBoutique Awards:

Boutique Business of the Year: *Palette by Peter J. Hemsley*

Boutique Hotel Design Project of the Year: *Zannier Hotels Sonop*, Namibia

Boutique Hotel Under 100 Rooms of the Year: *Asbury Ocean Club Hotel*, Asbury Park, NJ

Boutique Hotel Over 100 Rooms: *The Revolution Hotel*, Boston, MA

Boutique Travel Businesses - Travel Technology: *Vertoe*, Luggage Storage Anywhere, Anytime

Iconic Hotelier of the Year: *David Bowd*, Owner, SALT Hotels

Emerging Hotelier of the Year: *Chris Pardo*, Co-Founder & Chief Development Officer, ARRIVE Hotels & Restaurants

To learn more about the 2020 StayBoutique Awards by BLLA, visit BLLA.org/Awards.

About the Boutique & Lifestyle Leaders Association (BLLA)

The official organization for the world’s boutique lifestyle leaders promoting connection, education, and advocacy. As a pioneer in forecasting the boutique movement, the BLLA’s network has grown beyond its hotel foundation to welcome more passionate entrepreneurs, businesses and purveyors that amplify the boutique lifestyle. BLLA is a catalyst for trends and the future of boutique. blla.org

About StayBoutique - StayBoutique discovers the best in boutique for the world to experience, be inspired by and share. As the BLLA’s media platform, StayBoutique has been part of the boutique movement for the last 10 years. As boutique has grown from travel experiences into a thriving lifestyle, StayBoutique has extended beyond their hospitality origins to reach into consumers’ lives. stay-boutique.com