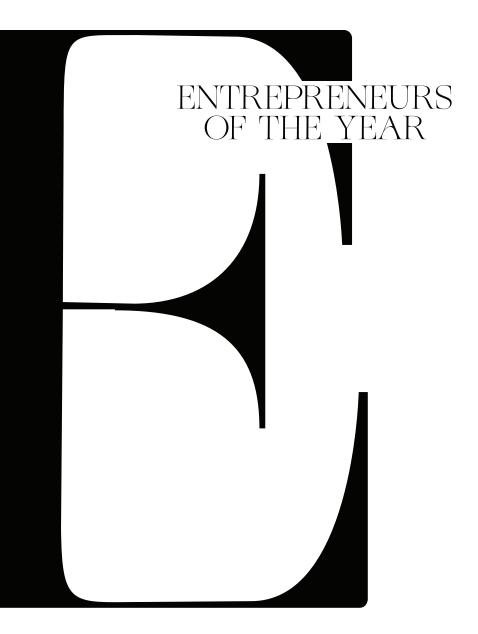
THE RETURN OF STYLE & SUBSTANCE





NOBLEMAN'S EXCLUSIVE WITH MONTAGE INTERNATIONAL'S ALAN & MICHAEL FUERSTMAN

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At NOBLEMAN, our mission is to feature the very best of everything. It is our common goal to highlight the men (and women) who set the standard in their respective industries. This issue marks our first-ever Entrepreneurs of the Year Award, and who better to receive this than Alan and Michael Fuerstman, founders and creative forces behind Montage International. While our shortlist was filled with visionaries and savvy operators, the Fuerstman family quickly jumped to the top of our list. Their passion and flair for the hospitality industry is indeed significant, and we are very proud to award them this honor. To say that the hotel industry has suffered this past year (or is it two years now?) would be somewhat of an understatement. However, some organizations have taken the time to reevaluate and, most importantly, redefine what hospitality means; Montage International is such a company.



or the last forty years, Alan Fuerstman has been a pioneer in the rarefied air of luxury hospitality. As Founder, Chairman and CEO of Montage International - Alan has guided its flagship properties across the country and abroad. Alongside his son Michael, he has also cofounded the very successful Pendry Hotels & Resorts. Its latest is the Pendry West Hollywood, where the famous Sunset Strip hosts a one of a kind property that is bound to

change the way we look at urban hotels and help redefine an area badly in need of revitalization.

With 149 rooms and 40 ultra-luxury private residences, this is not a massive property, but looks can be deceiving. Behind the sleek façade lies an impressive gem of an operation, at once beautiful and sophisticated, modern yet cozy. It is a place equally at home with the glitter and glamour of Hollywood and yet comfortable enough to bring your family to enjoy a staycation.

Amid a hectic time (this interview took place the day before its grand opening,) Alan and Michael (Pendry's Co-Founder and Creative Director) give us their thoughts on the future of hospitality and what makes a great hotelier.

N: LET'S TALK ABOUT WHAT LUXURY MEANS NOWADAYS. WITH THE PAST 18 MONTHS' EVENTS SLOWLY GOING INTO OUR REARVIEW MIRROR, HOW DOES A PROPERTY LIKE THE PENDRY THRIVE IN THIS NEW, SOMEWHAT FRAGILE ECONOMY?

AF: I think for me, for us, luxury has always been about quality. So, you know, the idea of what's luxury can evolve a little bit. However, in terms of a hospitality experience, we base everything around our service culture. What it's all about is creating exceptional experiences for our guests. We are acutely aware of the new dynamic that we are facing as an industry and that the idea of luxury has certainly changed.

MF: It's worth mentioning that it's not just this past year, but for the last decade or so. As a society, we are reevaluating the way we consume... everything. Luxury, communications, hospitality, etc. What types of purchases do we make? How do we want to spend our time? What's important? The very idea and concept of the Pendry are to take the service culture, which has become a trademark of our Montage properties, and apply it to a particular environment and geography while staying authentic to our core values.

N: MONTAGE AND PENDRY ARE BOTH WEST COAST OPERATIONS WITH A DISTINCT FEELING AND VIBE. IS THAT ON PURPOSE?

AF: Without a doubt. We are a Southern California-based luxury hospitality company, which means doing progressive, forward-thinking, and contemporary things. We are trying to push the bounds of what's possible and what can happen in a hospitality environment. For us, it's a great business to be in. We enjoy what we're doing and it keeps us sharp. We believe that this hospitality notion can quickly transfer to other regions (Pendry Chicago just opened and New York and Park City open later this year). It's more than just geography; it's about a raison d'être.

MF: Our objective is to stay ahead of our guests' lives, the way they are living. Not just with hotels, but with what is happening in fashion, art, and architecture. We want our hotels to be at the intersection of all these different industries. If we do our job right, the Pendry can feature all of this under one [beautiful] roof.

N: WE'VE TALKED ABOUT LUXURY AND WHAT IT REPRESENTS NOWADAYS; HOW HAS IT EVOLVED?

AF: I founded Montage almost 20 years ago. It was on the somewhat revolutionary premise that old-world traditional luxury was too stuffy or too pretentious and that the next generation of the luxury traveler was looking for a much more gracious and humble approach to luxury. So we changed our style of service to accommodate this new era, got away from what was scripted, and paying attention to the things that made luxury so special; craftsmanship, attention to detail, personalization of service, and being able to do those things in an environment where you could be as comfortable wearing jeans as you would be in a suit.

MF: Again, it was about stripping [away] all the bs that people had come to expect with traditional luxury. We were pleasantly surprised to find out that the older generation didn't want that either. We created a whole new environment based on what our guests, young and old, enjoyed, not what the industry had told us all these years. Today, our customers are looking for a place where they belong, a sense of style that reflects the environment in which they are operating, which is why no two hotels look identical. We try and capture the essence of the communities in which we serve from a stylistic perspective.

AF: ... then we overlay our service style, and thus far, it has been a winning formula.

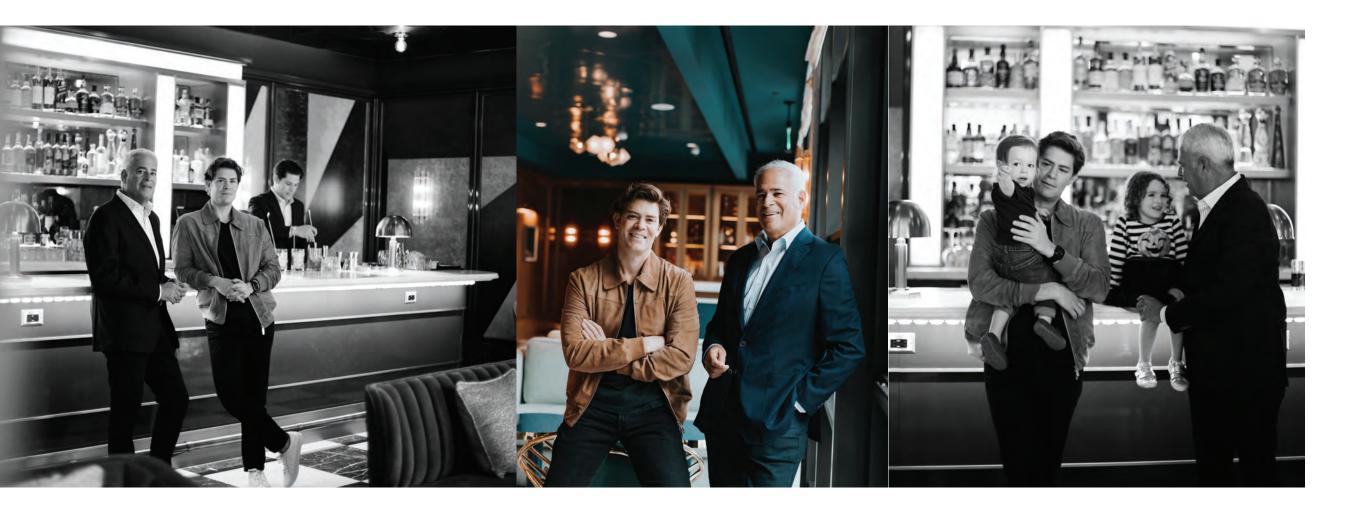
N: THIS NEW WAVE OF LUXURY CONSUMERS IS PERCEIVED TO BE YOUNGER, ARE THEY NOT?

MF: They are younger, and they're pulling the previous generation of luxury consumers with them. It is a considerable shift indeed. The trend (let's hope it stays like this) is to value experiences over things. We try to create these moments. It's why it's important to think through the choreography when thinking of the customer's journey throughout a hotel. What's the first interaction with our team? How are you made to feel comfortable? How were you made to feel inspired? It's about rethinking how people are experiencing hotels. The younger generation pushes this trend forward. It's a fascinating time, not only for us but also for the entire industry.

N: ALL YOUR PROPERTIES REMIND ME OF A BEAUTIFUL HOME, ALBEIT THE MOST BEAUTIFUL HOME ONE HAS SEEN. IS IT ON PURPOSE?

AF: It is definitely on purpose. It goes back to what we were saying previously: We want our guests to feel at home. We realize that traveling can be difficult, but we want the best part of your journey to stay in our properties. One of the biggest compliments we receive is when our guests ask, "Where can we get that paint color? Where did you get that fabric or material?" Because we want our hotels and resorts to be aspirational as well as comfortable.

"It's always been the two of us and our team building something amazing together."



N: WHAT IS YOUR ULTIMATE GOAL AS A HOTELIER? WHAT IS THE ONE THING THAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN FOR YOU TO FULFILL YOUR MISSION?

AF: It comes out to the environment that you create for the guests. It's many factors coming together. It is pretty apparent when you stay at a hotel that's switched on; from the moment the doorman greets you, you are made to feel special. When our associates can relate to our guests and deliver service in a manner that captures their hearts, they will want to come back over and over again.

MF: There is a real connection that we experience with our guests, as we get to know them, as we understand their preferences. It's just not a single item, but a combination of what you experienced when you stay with us. It is one hundred percent about emotionally connecting with our guests.

N: MICHAEL, THE CREATIVE DIRECTION OF THE HOTELS IS SOMETHING THAT ALWAYS STRIKES ME AS PERSONAL, HOW IS YOUR SENSE OF STYLE INFLUENCING THE DESIGN OF THE HOTELS?

MF: The more hotels we design, the more my sense of style evolves. I feel like I'm constantly exposed to some new design language. It mirrors my understanding of aesthetics. I aspire to live a simple life at home, in a clean, less cluttered way. It's somewhat more accessible in a hotel than it is in a house with two young kids. The exciting thing is you're always learning. I ask myself and our staff a series of questions. What is the highest and best use of the architectural style? What's the ideal interior style? How do we find the right collaborators and partners? What will resonate with our guests and the marketplace? Each of our properties has its unique perspective with singular characteristics particular to each environment and city they are a part of. We are very proud of that.

N: EACH PENDRY LOCATION FEELS VERY DIFFERENT; WHAT WERE THE WEST HOLLYWOOD PROPERTY'S UNIOUE CHALLENGES?

AF: With each property, we want to create a "moment" for everyone who comes in. Here on Sunset, we wanted to show the unique scale and ambition of this incredible project. It's down a sweeping hill; there are residential buildings in every direction, retail spaces, restaurants, etc. So, our guests enter the property in the middle of all that. We have this fantastic, beautiful courtyard with giant landscaping, gorgeous lighting, which makes you feel like entering a resort, and urban oasis. It is undoubtedly a luxury property, but one that makes you feel at ease. It is stylish, attractive, artistic, yet welcoming and comfortable.

AF: Creating a luxury hotel is a reflection of the community. In addition to our hotel rooms, we have these fantastic residences where owners can experience our incredible services and amenities in their own homes. Living in a hotel is the best, and we wanted our residence owners to be amazed at what they get for their purchase.

N: GOING BACK FOR A MOMENT, LOOKING AT THE CHALLENGES THAT THE PANDEMIC BROUGHT TO THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, HOW DID YOUR COMPANY FIND A WAY TO NOT ONLY SURVIVE BUT THRIVE AMID UNCERTAINTY?

AF: Well, for us, it was finding a way to reinvent the way we look at our properties and meeting the challenges head-on. It certainly wasn't easy to bring a new property to life while dealing with everything that has been going on, but it also gave us time to reevaluate how to deal with it internally, creating the safest environment for our associates and our guests. We spent the first few months of the pandemic developing the safety protocols that exist today and prepare for what we knew would be a challenging time for us all.

MF: Normalcy, or what we think is going to be expected, is a way off, of course, but the experience has been different throughout the country. Some of our properties did quite well after the initial shock (South Carolina's Montage comes to mind, as it was pretty spread out with less personal interaction and natural social distancing). It also gave us the time to develop some new tools and resources that allowed us to work at home yet remain productive. We continue to evolve as is needed.

N: LOOKS LIKE THERE IS QUITE A BUZZ IN HOLLYWOOD ABOUT THE NEW PROPERTY?

MF: It is such a unique hotel. We have nine different bars, which allows our local patrons to come and join us for a cocktail or dinner. We have a social club, a bowling alley, a music venue (paying homage to its predecessor, The House of Blues). The whole building is wrapped in a high-definition digital "skin," which allows us to uniquely feature some of our brand partners. It speaks to what Los Angeles is all about, excitement, cutting-edge design and amenities, and a real sense of theatrics captured at every turn.

N: AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, IT LOOKS LIKE YOU ARE STILL ENJOYING THE CHALLENGES?

AF/MF: It's easy. We love what we do. When we're not building hotels, we're on the road fifty-percent of our time, staying in hotels and experiencing them. We think the idea of a hotel is charming; you are mixing with others from a community. There's always something exciting and new to see, and this dynamic constantly changes. There are so many different things under one roof. It's like falling in love and bringing these things to life over and over again. The opposite would be boring. We get to live these extraordinary lives and take everything that we've experienced and put them into the world for people then enjoy.

N: HOW DO YOU STAY MOTIVATED?

AF/MF: It's a pertinent question. We just opened Pendry Chicago, then in September we open Pendry Manhattan West and Pendry Park City in December. We get to build great teams of the most talented individuals who help us realize our vision. It is exciting, and we wouldn't want it any other way. It's very humbling to have this level of momentum, acceptance, and resonance with our guests. To have the ability to continue putting great things in the world in some of the most incredible cities and resort destinations is a responsibility we relish.

"It's like falling in love and bringing these things to life over and over again."

N: ONE LAST OUESTION, WHAT IS THE DYNAMIC OF A FATHER AND SON WORKING RELATIONSHIP?

AF: I have incredible respect for what Mike brings to the table. He brings such a different and worthy dimension to our company that I tend to forget that he's my son. He's earned his place within our organization and has just displayed incredible leadership.

MF: We've always had an excellent, powerful, tight relationship, and it starts with that. It was never, "you're going to come into the hotel industry, and you're going to work for me." It was: "There is this awesome world that I'm a part of, and if you are ever interested, it's there. Just know that you're going to have to work harder than everybody else." It was great for me because I hold myself to my own lofty standards of excellence. It's never felt like working together was working for him. It's always been the two of us and our team building something amazing together.