

Rotary Panel Looks at Future of Luxury Hotels

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BY SAM BRASLOW MARCH 27, 2021



The Rotary Club of Beverly Hills held a roundtable discussion on the future of the luxury hotel industry in Beverly Hills on March 24. The subject has risen in urgency since the devastation wreaked on the hospitality industry by the COVID-19 pandemic, tens of billions in lost revenue and a proportionate amount in lost taxes for local governments like Beverly Hills.

The discussion consisted of a panel of hospitality experts.

According to Luxury Hotel Advisors Co-Founder Carlos Lopes, industry analysts are predicting a return to peak pre-COVID-19 occupancy by 2023. Beverly Hills, however, has a slightly rosier forecast owing to its reputation and high-end offerings, Lopes said, estimating recovery by mid-2022.

“You can’t compare Beverly Hills with Atlanta or Dallas, or most other major cities. I think we’ve got to look at Beverly Hills as perhaps the Monaco of California,” he said. “This is one of the most exciting destinations in California.”

Across the board, the panelists acknowledged the need to transform certain practices within the industry in order to reassure guests of their safety. As the world has changed over the course of the pandemic, so, too, must hotels and lodgings.

“As a consumer, my world has changed completely. How do you bring that into a hotel?” asked Shane O’Flaherty, Microsoft’s Global Director of Travel, Transportation & Hospitality.

O’Flaherty pointed to research that characterized hospitality as one of the “least automated industries on the planet,” saying that this moment offers the industry an opportunity to grow.

He posed the following question:

“How do you bring digital into [the luxury hotel experience] to create kind of a seamless journey for the consumer and how do we use digital to create that emotional connection with the consumer?”