

VACATION  INDUSTRY

APRIL – JUNE 2016

# review

A PUBLICATION OF INTERVAL LEISURE GROUP

## 40 YEARS AND COUNTING

INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL  
HONORS THE PAST,  
EMBRACES THE FUTURE



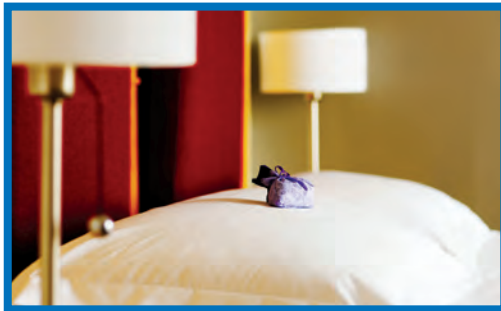
THE CASE FOR  
**HOTEL CONVERSIONS**

SHEDDING LIGHT ON  
**SOLAR POWER**

WEIGHING IN ON THE  
**SHARING ECONOMY**

# The New Gold (and

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# The Right Stuff

**A**fter Hurricane Wilma in 2005, I was among the employees who moved to the Member-Services Center for two weeks because the corporate offices were without power. Quarters were tight as we filled cubicles that the staff there so graciously gave up. But instead of getting in one another's way, we experienced a heightened camaraderie and unity. We came together each day, working to relocate members whose exchanges were affected by the storm and to keep the business operating at full capacity. By all measures, the company's performance was exceptional in the aftermath of Wilma, and I believe that it was due in no small part to the can-do spirit of a close-knit staff.

## Not-so-Random

While this memory stands out as one of the strongest examples of the drive and dedication among Interval employees, it is by no means an isolated occurrence. For nearly 35 years, I've witnessed these not-so-random acts of commitment, not just in times that demanded uncommon effort, but on a day-to-day basis.

As Interval International observes its 40th anniversary this year, I've thought a lot about what has made the company successful. Of course, a great idea begat by entrepreneurial minds served as a critical foundation. Devotion to key tenets of doing business — providing quality over quantity, substance over size — played its part, as did solid products and programming.

But bottom line, what makes Interval great is its people.

## Keeping Good Company

In this issue, we recognize some individuals who've played a role in shaping and steering the business on its positive track, embodying attributes that we've always held dear: integrity, continuity, and leadership.

But the employees featured in this special edition are by no means the only ones who've helped nurture Interval International. They represent the nearly 1,200 employees who bring so much in terms of skill and experience. Raul Estrada, who's been with Interval for almost 30 years, is featured on page 42, but standing behind him is a staff 500 strong, all equally invested in serving the members.

Three employees who joined Interval before me deserve recognition for their longevity: Larry Dettelis came through the Buffalo headquarters in 1981, and moved to Miami, eventually to head up worldwide activity as vice president of distribution and commercial services. Since 1980, Josephine Olachea has been a symbol of continuity in the finance department and serves as coordinator of the treasury today. And Pat Rasekhi, assistant vice president of membership marketing, has been with Interval since 1979! (She can tell you

BY  
**Craig M. Nash**

CHAIRMAN,  
PRESIDENT, AND CEO  
INTERVAL LEISURE GROUP



**“For nearly 35 years, I’ve witnessed these not-so-random acts of commitment, not just in times that demanded uncommon effort, but on a day-to-day basis.”**

stories about the days when exchanges were tracked with color-coded stickers on a large board.) These superlative team members are truly examples of what's best about Interval International, and I'm honored to be in their company.

## Someone to Count On

And then there are those who are no longer with us. We recall co-founders Mario Rodriguez and Tom Davis, whose vision and entrepreneurial spirit live on today. And I remember two people in the London office whom I grew close to when I was helping to build the European business in the '90s. On my credenza sits a photo of Jitu Mehta, John Roderick, and me. Their deaths were a loss for the Interval family and for me personally. Over the years, we've said goodbye to too many people to mention — and all are greatly missed.

As I reflect on the timeline, I can't help but remember my own early years. Traveling around the country working toward constructive industry regulation was both exhilarating and exhausting at the same time. But I always knew that the people at Interval had my back. Ken Knight, who was president and my boss at the time, believed in and fully supported my efforts, giving me the resources to get a tough job done.

And, of course, there were others I counted on, then — and now, including: Jeanette Marbert, who helped me navigate this long journey; David Gilbert, who returned to guide Interval during this important time; and Arlene Cade, my executive assistant, whose contributions for 20 years cannot be overstated.

It comes down to this: Delivering great vacation experiences takes more than a solid regulatory platform and state-of-the-art technology. It takes *touch*. And I am moved to have been touched by so many outstanding individuals over the years — those who've come and gone, and those still contributing to the success of Interval International. [ ]



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NEW AT INTERVAL

## Vacation Benefits to Inspire



### For Interval Gold®, Interval Platinum®, and Club Interval Gold® members

■ **Interval Experiences: One-of-a-Kind Adventure.** In addition to the recently added tour exchange, Interval Options® is expanding its vacation choices even more. Members can exchange weeks or points toward unique adventures around the world, from sampling wine with a master sommelier to getting hands-on golf tips from a PGA pro. At launch, members will find 15 Interval Experiences listed under the Benefits tab on IntervalWorld.com. Plans are to add eight offerings each quarter.

### For Interval Gold, Interval Platinum, Club Interval Gold, and Leisure Time Passport® members

■ **Dining Connection: Serving up Special Perks.** Members enjoy VIP treatment, including perks such as complimentary appetizers, drinks, desserts, and kitchen tours — and exclusive access to more than 150 partner restaurants in 18 top markets in the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

■ **Golf Connection: VIP Treatment Par for the Course.** Members have access to nearly 900 private courses across the U.S. and Canada. Plus, they receive 15 percent off golf equipment available through Golf Connection, and are able to search in real time for available tee times across more than 2,500 public courses.

■ **City Guides: Lowdown on Highlights.** These helpful resources feature hot restaurants, shopping, nightlife, and attractions, as well as in-depth travel tips and advice on top travel destinations worldwide — including Interval resort locations.

When it comes to vacation experiences, what do Interval members seek? All evidence points to *variety* as a key motivator. After all, that's what draws them to the exchange benefit in the first place, right?

Now, Interval International enhances the variety of options even further for eligible members, with several new benefits — slated to launch in April 2016 — that members can access on IntervalWorld.com. “We’re always working on new ways to boost the value proposition of the exchange and vacation ownership product,” says Sharon Freed, senior vice president of consumer marketing. “These benefits are designed to satisfy the travel aspirations of the most discriminating owners.”

SOCIAL MEDIA

### In a Word

With more than 230,000 member profiles on Interval International's Community member forum, members are not shy about asking questions and sharing their experiences. These were the top search words in 2015.

TOP 5  
SEARCH WORDS

ALL-INCLUSIVE  
E-PLUS  
GUEST CERTIFICATE  
MAUI  
RETRADE

DEVELOPER'S PICK

## WorldPoints at Point of Sale

It's a tiny tool — thin enough to slip into a wallet. But plenty of developers have discovered that the Interval International Visa Signature® card with WorldPoints® rewards — part of Interval's Affiliate Advantages — has a mighty effect. This exclusive credit card offered at the point of sale not only sweetens the deal, but presents an additional financing vehicle that can be used toward the purchase. It also helps leverage an “activate today” incentive, offering points to customers who use the card for a down payment or purchase.

Michelle Cloos of Vacation Ownership Sales, Inc., can attest to the program's benefits, among them realizing a US\$1,500 higher approval amount than with the card program previously used. “Overall, this has increased our cash flow about 3 to 4 percent.”



## Quality Linens, Competitive Prices

Interval International recently added a new Affiliate Advantages benefit to its suite of services. Harbor Linen, a Bed Bath & Beyond company, boasts an extensive line of bed and bath linens made specifically for the hospitality industry (see page 62). Says Chris Rogers, Harbor Linen's vice president, "We are developing several custom bed, bath, and appliance programs for Interval's member resorts. These items will be available for a competitive price, with quick shipping, and be backed by our customer satisfaction guarantee."

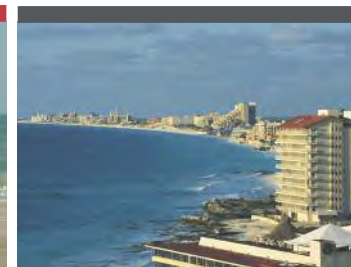
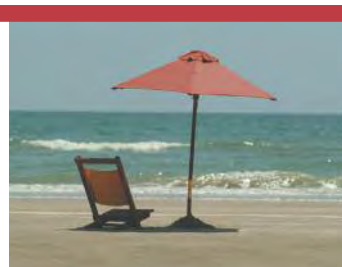
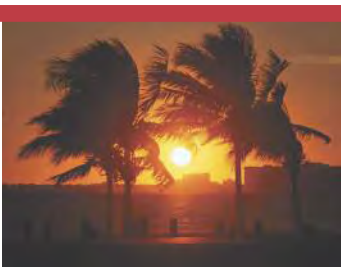
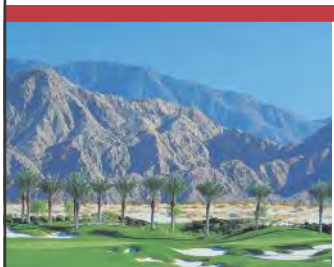


## ILG Acquires Interest in Great Destinations

A subsidiary of Interval Leisure Group (ILG) has acquired a 50-percent interest in Great Destinations. Led by timeshare industry veteran Andy Gennuso, the California-based company is a fee-for-service, real-estate brokerage firm. It specializes in reselling resort timeshare properties on behalf of independent homeowners' associations at legacy resorts.

Great Destinations has worked for the past three years, marketing and selling thousands of timeshare intervals at price points that offer value to consumers. A Club Interval Gold membership is part of each sale, giving new purchasers the opportunity to exchange on a points basis through the Interval International resort network.

"Great Destinations shares our commitment to the ongoing success of legacy resorts," says Craig M. Nash, ILG chairman, president, and CEO. "ILG has been working to provide properties that are managed by VRI and TPI solutions to the challenge of finding buyers of defaulted inventory. A robust distribution vehicle, such as Great Destinations, strengthens resorts' financial condition by adding maintenance fee-paying customers to their roster of owners."



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By Judy Kenninger

# DIY LOAN SERVICING

## Equiant's New Platform Offers Tools of the Trade



Andrew Gennuso, president of Great Destinations Inc., doesn't think anyone else can take care of his club's owners the way his employees do. "Our members have one number to call, no matter what the issue is," he says. "Our loan servicing personnel sit right next to our owner services team, and they work together to deliver the best service possible."

That doesn't mean, however, that his company has had to do without the expertise and technology that a professional loan-servicing organization can provide. In fact, Great Destinations is using the same state-of-the-art tools as Equiant, a leading independent receivables service specializing in shared ownership. How did that happen, you might ask?

### A Hybrid Model

Arizona-based Equiant, which handles an active portfolio exceeding US\$1.2 billion and includes more than 125,000 individual consumer loans, has now moved to a new model for loan servicing, one that keeps vacation ownership companies firmly in the driver's seat. Called Platform as a Service (PaaS), it's a hybrid of the traditional loan-servicing model and the Software as a Service (SaaS) model that's rapidly taking over the way computer software for business is delivered.

"Equiant's new platform provides developers with the tools to manage their portfolios, the way they want them managed," says Peter Moody, Equiant's vice president of

## Partners in Timeshare

### Equiant Offering Enhances Interval's Affiliate Advantages Lineup

Five years ago, Interval International invited Equiant to become an Affiliate Advantages partner, one of a select group of value-driven companies that offer special pricing and services exclusively to Interval clients. Affiliate Advantages partners include the leading names in their fields, with special expertise in the shared ownership industry.

According to Bryan Ten Broek, Interval's senior vice president of resort sales and marketing, Equiant came highly recommended. "Meridian Financial Services reported that they had a strong working relationship with Equiant, and things went from there," he recalls. "We met with Equiant's leadership during a Shared Ownership Investment Conference and immediately realized that including them in our lineup represented a unique value proposition for Interval affiliates."

While Meridian Financial Services is a sophisticated third-party collection agency that helps developers retain owners, keep them satisfied with their pur-

chase, and keep loans in good standing, Equiant is the first resource for payment processing, maintenance-fee servicing, document custody, and merchant processing. The two companies have even developed an interface to assist when accounts move from servicing to collections.

"Having both companies in our corner allows us to present a one-stop-shop system to potential affiliates," Ten Broek says. "It's a seamless transition. The feedback we get from developers about their experiences with the program is consistently very positive. Of course, they like saving money, too."

The Affiliate Advantages program has advantages for Interval, too. "Equiant and the other partners have done training sessions with our staff where they explain exactly how their services work and get into the details of the challenges affiliates may face," he says. "This allows Interval staff to be a better resource for their clients and be proactive with ways we can help them be even more successful."





PETER MOODY

business development. "It's a complete accounts-receivable system that includes loan servicing, maintenance-fee servicing and invoicing, a collections module, document custody, and multi-option reporting tools."

PaaS agreements allow customers to develop, run, and manage software without the complexity of building and maintaining the infrastructure typically associated with developing proprietary software. Through cloud technology, Equiant's platform provides the servers, storage methodology, and

other services to host developer accounts. In the current age of data insecurity and strict collections law, that's an important distinction.

### Ultra-Security

"The Web platform is very secure and operates under PCI Level 1 certification standards and SSAE 16 compliance requirements," Moody says. "In addition, the platform provides best practices and tool sets to transform the payment processing function and improve portfolio performance."

Equiant's cloud-based platform is hosted at the ultra-secure SUPERNAP data center in Las Vegas, one of just five in the world rated as Tier IV. "It's critically important to know that your data is both safe and secure," Moody says. "This includes being safe from hacking as well as secure in the case of natural disasters, power outages, and other possible business interruptions."

Traditionally, vacation ownership companies have had to choose between hiring a third-party organization that specializes in professional loan servicing or developing their own technology and systems. Gennuso appreciates the hybrid approach offered by Equiant. "It didn't make sense for us to recreate what Equiant had already built," he says. "It was simple to train our staff to use the platform, and now we have all the tools we could ask for."

### Customized Reports

The platform includes Equiant's Business Intelligence Tools (BITs), which allow developers to create their own detailed reports with the information they find most valuable. "You're able to download the data and slice and dice it the way you want to," Gennuso says. "We create custom charts and graphs to discover trends."

If accounts do become delinquent, Gennuso turns to a service offered through Interval International's Affiliate Advantages, Meridian Financial Services, to provide collection services. "The way both companies work together makes it easy for developers," he says.

For clients who adopt the "DIY" approach, cost savings are part of the appeal. "The pricing model is volume-based, so smaller developers don't have big up-front fees and larger developers save on a per-account basis," Moody explains.

Equiant continues to provide traditional loan servicing to clients who prefer that approach or have lenders that require it. "We'll leverage our expertise to help clients design their most desired and profitable business option," Moody says. [ ]

## Your partner in success.



Our experience in working with Equiant has been that they employ top level systems and people to manage the all important servicing and collection aspects of our business. Most recently, Equiant introduced Equiant Analytics, which allows us to instantly analyze key performance indicators within our portfolios and custodial documents. These tools are invaluable in today's portfolio management environment. True to form, Equiant anticipated their client's concerns and delivered the tools needed.

**Thomas S. Balamas**  
*Managing Member, Accelerated Assets, LLC*

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By Betsy Sheldon



# Service Is Sales

## How Hassle-Free Check-in Boosts Bottom Line for The Villa Group

To Owen Perry, it's simple: "Anything you do to improve your service should end up in your sales, because happy people buy more." And the president of The Villa Group is quick to remind you, "That's our motto — happy people buy more."

For The Villa Group, it's a motto that appears to prove itself out. At least when it comes to a change in check-in procedures at the developer's Villa del Palmar at the Islands of Loreto in Mexico's Baja California Sur. Since spring 2015, owners and exchange guests coming to the resort can complete the check-in process from the comfort of their home and bypass the line at the reception desk. Once they arrive, getting into their unit is as simple as picking up a wristband room key from a bellhop.

Result? Happier owners, for sure. And for The Villa Group, a happy uptick in sales. "We've seen a 30-percent increase in members at the resort upgrading their time with us," says Perry. An outcome that has motivated the company to roll out the hassle-free check-in to its other resorts in top Mexican vacation destinations, including Cabo San Lucas, Riviera Nayarit, Puerto Vallarta, and Cancún.

### A-ha! Moment

The Villa Group has always sought to provide superlative service. A few years ago, the company launched Personal Concierge, which helps owners and exchange guests pre-plan their stay, making arrangements for everything from airport pickup to spa appointments and sport fishing.

And yet as he contemplated the arrival process itself, Perry had an a-ha! moment. "Some of these members we've known for 30 years. And here we were, still treating them like they're somebody off the streets. By the time they go through security and travel internationally, by the time they get to the resort, they're beat up and the last thing they want to do is wait to check in." He asked himself, "Is there a better way to do this?" From this, the pilot program at the Loreto property was born.

As part of the process, once guests make a reservation, they receive a confirmation with a request for the information they'd need at on-site

check-in. The resort inputs this information into its system and provides a pre check-in code. Once owners arrive at the resort, a bellhop has their room-key wristbands ready and waiting.

According to Perry, the program's popularity has been substantiated by owner response. "We've got tremendous positive feedback from owners who think that, 'Wow, not only is this great service, but I feel more appreciated as a member or owner.'"

"We had one member tell us, 'I was at the pool having a margarita within 10 minutes of arriving at the resort!'"

### Ready to Roll

Perry was always confident that the idea was a good one, but he wanted to start small. "Loreto is a smaller operation, and we could have more control. It's also about how you implement it, how you standardize it, and the cost involved. We've been very thorough with this process."

That effort paid off. Not only is the resort selling upgrades to owners, The Villa Group has found the cost impact to be negligible. Says Perry, "We use the same people that would be in charge of checking people in the reservations systems anyway, so it's really no extra cost to us."

And it lightens the demands on staff. "Usually, all the planes arrive within a couple hours of each other, and it really takes a lot of the pressure off the whole property because we don't have these long lines."

The Villa Group intends to roll out the check-in program to its other properties in 2016. For the time being, the abbreviated check-in will only be available to The Villa Group owners and exchange guests. "For other guests, the check-in process is a little bit more complex. But for timeshare owners we know well, it's so easy with today's communications technology to contact them at home and let them go through the process."

Perry reports that 87 percent of owners and exchangers at Loreto are using the check-in bypass procedure. To Perry, the high success rate should come as no great surprise. "Happy people buy more — I think it's that basic. Let's make these people happy." [E]

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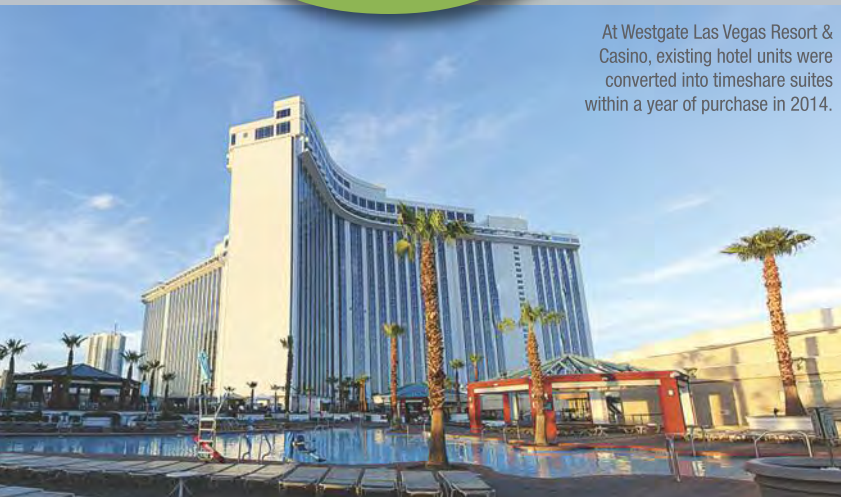


# 5

## REASONS TO CONVERT

Your Next Timeshare Resort Could Be a Hotel

By Judy Kenninger



At Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino, existing hotel units were converted into timeshare suites within a year of purchase in 2014.

In 2014, David Siegel, president and CEO of Westgate Resorts, grabbed headlines when he climbed onto a crane to be lifted to a 279-foot (85 meters) marquee to replace the L in the sign of what had been the Las Vegas Hotel (previously the Las Vegas Hilton) with the Westgate W. Arguably the largest conversion of a hotel to a timeshare resort, the project is just one of many such efforts underway. “Hotel conversions have a lot of potential benefits for timeshare developers,” says Jay Wilson, vice president of resort sales and service for Interval International. “They can be a great way to get product to market quickly while cutting the costs of land, permitting, architectural plans, and engineering.”





Hotels in popular urban areas are prime candidates for conversion to timeshare. Marriott Vacation Club at The Mayflower in Washington, D.C., fills a demand in the destination.

Ed Kinney, global vice president of Marriott Vacations Worldwide, agrees. “Hotel conversions allow us to get into markets where we see pent-up demand,” he says. “It’s certainly advantageous for us to expand the portfolio that we offer Marriott Vacation Club owners.”

Could a hotel conversion work for your company? Here, timeshare developers who have traveled this road share reasons why it works for them, plus potholes to watch out for.

### 1. It’s Quick(er)

“Conversions are a great idea when developers want to get product to market quickly,” Wilson says. By largely avoiding permitting and zoning issues, plus saving months to years on the construction timeline, renovating an existing hotel — be it the entire property or an area of the property — means guests can check in sooner rather than later. Westgate’s new Las Vegas resort opened its first timeshare suites just a year after the July 2014 purchase, a fraction of the time that building a 30-story tower with 3,000 rooms would have taken.

### 2. \$\$\$ Savings

Anna Kiseleva, business development director for Club Sunset Boutique, says the company’s Club Laguna Suites in Cancún, Mexico, cost much less to develop than previous projects. “For a relatively small investment, we were able to convert half of the resort’s rooms into one-bedroom suites, plus refresh the entire property’s feel,” she says. Because it’s an all-inclusive property, they didn’t add kitchens to the units, but, instead, created a gourmet fusion restaurant that prepares all food to order rather than have guests visit a buffet line. “It’s a smaller property, and guests really appreciate the personal touches we can provide. This is a nice model; now we’re looking for similar properties.”



“You’re able to create a higher-quality product if you acquire hotels for a more reasonable rate,” Wilson adds. “You can really knock out the FF&E at a higher level.”

### 3. New Markets

For multisite clubs, adding more dots on the map adds to the appeal. Hotel conversions, even just a floor or two of a larger property, allow clubs to add inventory at highly coveted destinations, including urban areas. Marriott has taken that approach at the Mayflower property in Washington, D.C., and also has projects underway in San Diego and San Francisco. “These are traditional markets that people have always wanted to go to,” Kinney says. “It’s certainly advantageous to have a larger portfolio to offer owners.”

That larger portfolio will soon include Marriott Vacation Club at Surfers Paradise on Australia's Gold Coast, also a very desirable location. For this project, MVC is converting 114 units into 88 studio, one-, and two-bedroom timeshare units. "There isn't too much we have to change; we're just enhancing the experience," Kinney says.

## 4. Built-in Amenities

Hotels usually feature restaurants, pools, spas, and other amenities to serve their guests. These features are, of course, highly desirable in a timeshare resort. Westgate's new Vegas property is an extreme example, but it has a 95,000-square-foot (8,826 square meters) casino that features Vegas' largest sports book facility, plus 15 restaurants and bars, a retail shopping center, a Regis Signature Salon, a spa and fitness center, and a heated pool.

Marriott Vacation Club guests staying at the Mayflower property have access to an on-site restaurant and bar as well as a fitness center and event space.

## 5. In-House Guests

For some projects, developers convert the entire property into timeshare units, but leaving some rooms as standard hotel inventory has its own advantage: in-house tours. "Developers can leverage the existing hotel operations to keep marketing costs down," Wilson explains. The key is to create an elevated experience for timeshare owners when compared with the standard hotel rooms. "You need to give them something different, a reason to buy since you'll be touring people who are staying there."

"Our business model is not to sell timeshare as a lodging product, but as a vacation experience," says Mark Waltrip, Westgate's chief operating officer. "We have dedicated spaces for owners, and if hotel guests use those amenities, they're paying extra. For example, if we have an indoor water park, timeshare owners use it for free, but hotel guests have to buy a pass. Timeshare guests also have a better-quality unit."

At the Mayflower property, MVC has a separate check-in area. "We're working on some extra perks that will distinguish the experience for owners and guests," Kinney says. "We'll make it unique but not intrusive to the hotel guest experience."

## A Couple of Potential Pitfalls

Of course, nothing's perfect. The number-one drawback to conversions, Waltrip says, is that, "You're living with someone else's decisions." Hotels that were built as a place to stay rather than as a resort may not have the best views, and the physical plant may not accommodate the addition of kitchens and laundry facilities. In areas affected by drought, water rights can be a problem. Plus, if the hotel lacks amenities, it can be difficult to create an experience that's different from a standard lodging property.

Still, Waltrip, Kinney, and Kiseleva all believe the benefits can outweigh any challenges. Wilson says it's easy to see why: "As the industry as a whole has migrated from sticks and bricks to a hospitality focus — but with the idea that you get a condo versus a hotel room — developers have added more services to bridge the gap between traditional timeshare and hotels. The younger generation wants restaurants and services on-site, and this trend makes it easier to make that happen. It will definitely continue." [ ]

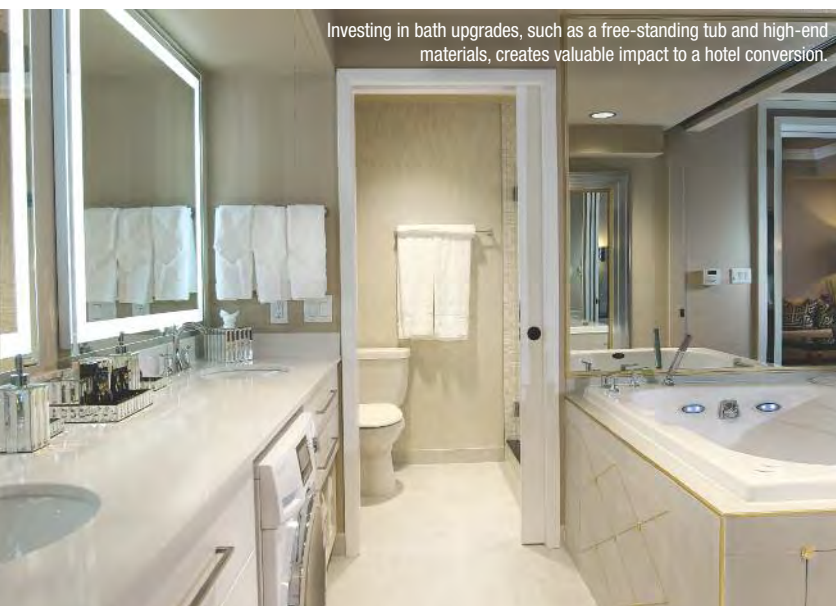
Judy Kenninger, RRP, heads Kenninger Communications, a provider of complete creative services to the shared-ownership industry. She has been covering vacation real estate for nearly two decades.

## Changing Spaces

How much do you need to change a hotel property to convert it to timeshare? Of course, that will vary with the property, the market, and the size of the units you're trying to create. Taking multiple rooms to make one-, two-, or three-bedroom suites is one option, but sometimes developers can create studios from just one room. "In most markets, three hotel bays create a two-bedroom lockout, and two bays will become a grand one-bedroom," Waltrip says.

But it's about more than adding space. "You'll want to create a more residential look and feel," advises Merilee Elliott of Merilee Elliott Interiors. "A big part of that is in the finishes. The move is to a more Danish modern or Scandinavian look, with oval or amoeba shapes, and away from brushed nickel to bronze." Here are some of her ideas for turning standard hotel rooms into memorable timeshare units.

- **Emphasize bathrooms.** "By removing a closet and adding an armoire, you can usually steal that square footage for a bigger bathroom," she says. The fixtures become design elements. A free-standing soaker tub adds impact, and sinks can rest on any type of furniture. Instead of tile, consider back-painted glass or colored acrylic, then use LED lighting behind it for impact.
- **Make a kitchenette or small kitchen count.** "Install built-ins and go with high-end finishes such as a copper sink," Elliott suggests. "It'd be really great to have a small ice-machine. It's unique and guests don't have to trot down the hall." Other ideas include using a plug-in induction hot plate, hiding a microwave inside the cabinet, and a wine cooler and a refrigerator below the counter in drawers.
- **Ditch the carpet.** "There's new click vinyl flooring that has a real wood look to it," Elliott says. "They take a mold of a real piece of wood, then use that to add texture and imprint a photo. It's 6- or 9-inch wide plank and cushioned. If you do that and have area rugs, it's a more residential feel."
- **Create separation.** In studio units, you can still have the feel of different rooms without adding walls. "There are really cool new products made from a synthetic material reminiscent of building blocks," says Elliott. "They come in panels and you can make them as wide and tall as you want."



Investing in bath upgrades, such as a free-standing tub and high-end materials, creates valuable impact to a hotel conversion.



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# Fair Share

How the Sharing Economy Might Affect —  
and Even Help — Timesharing

## MEET THE PANEL



**Sunil Aluvila**  
president and CEO,  
VacayStay Connect



**Michael Buchalter**  
vice president of  
timeshare operations,  
The Villa Group



**Robert Kistner**  
vice president,  
The Villa Group



**Brian Miller**  
executive vice president  
of sales, marketing, and  
service operations,  
Marriott Vacations  
Worldwide



**Howard Nusbaum**  
president and CEO,  
American Resort  
Development  
Association



**Jared Saft**  
vice president of sales  
and marketing,  
Westgate Resorts

**[ ]** By Betsy Sheldon

For those who've been part of the timeshare industry for any length of time, it's hard not to take a little pride in the soaring popularity of the sharing economy. After all, many have observed that timesharing is a forerunner of the new model. But the onslaught of peer-to-peer vacation rentals is not without its impact on the timeshare industry. These experts weigh the challenges and opportunities presented by the growing sharing economy.

## How are timesharing and the lodging aspect of the sharing economy alike in your mind?

**SAFT:** Timeshare, at its core, is about using only the portion of your lodging that you need and, therefore, sharing the burden of the expense with other like-minded individuals. While the concept is mature in our space, almost four decades later, it is traversing other verticals through the advent of new technology mediums.

**NUSBAUM:** We do share the idea that, why would you have a vacation home when you can enjoy the economies of scale of sharing it so that it isn't cost-prohibitive? And any time the American public is talking about staying in accommodations that are more than a 250-square-foot hotel room, that's good for timesharing.

**BUCHALTER:** I actually see it as quite different. Let's take Uber, which in my mind is a service business, whereas vacation ownership is a lifestyle business. It's creating dreams and implications for a lifestyle.

## How else are the sharing economy lodging options and timesharing different?

**ALUVILA:** The sharing economy is more peer-to-peer, more collaborative, where the seller is an individual — not a large company — who wants to rent his accommodations. Timeshare companies are commercial enterprises, which include major hospitality brands. Timeshare resorts offer significantly more amenities and better service.

**MILLER:** Certainly, timesharing offers a full resort experience, whereas, typically, the lodgings in the sharing economy are not full resorts. So the service level and the amenities of a full resort or urban experience are going to be vastly different.

In almost all cases, timeshare resorts are going to be better located. We spend a lot of money to develop locations near the beach and the city center and the like, and you're not always going to be guaranteed that in the sharing economy.

**SAFT:** In the current sharing economy, the product being shared is usually a very quick transaction or time period. Our product typically requires a significantly longer "sharing period" of several decades or even perpetuity. It will be interesting to see if this becomes a major impediment to further widespread adoption of our product.

**NUSBAUM:** We're designed as a commercial enterprise. We are highly regulated with tons of consumer protections, whether it's credit

card security, whether it's fire safety or health safety, whether it's the fact that you know the rooms are professionally cleaned and maintained and the quality is at a certain level, or that we pay taxes and support the local community and tourism infrastructure.

And there is a shared purpose that I would say only timeshare and the cruise industry have. All of these families are on vacation. You're looking for kids' activities? So are the people next door. If you're staying in someone's random apartment, you don't have that same shared purpose.

## Is the sharing economy, specifically those entities that provide lodging, bad for timesharing? Why? Or why not?

**MILLER:** I don't know yet. It's definitely got the potential to be very disruptive, for both traditional lodging and the timeshare business. We have to be diligent about tracking the evolution of these companies and technologies. We're going to have to stay on top of their development and, more importantly, the consumer trends around their usage. And make sure that our product and technological offerings are keeping pace.

**BUCHALTER:** I don't see it as a threat. I think they're two completely different business models. Somebody who goes for a VRBO is a completely different client than somebody who's going to come and purchase from us. Do we lose some rental business from them? Probably. But a guy

who stays in a home and doesn't have maid service, and doesn't have a pool and restaurants and so forth is a different client than the one who comes to our resort.

**KISTNER:** I agree. We live in a world of competition. I think it's always existed. But I think the Internet's changed the world for us all. Yes, it's a tougher application set now because they have access to a larger audience.

**SAFT:** In the long-run, I think it will be excellent for the timeshare business. I believe this is an important and healthy development for educating the next generation of timeshare buyers. If they are comfortable with sharing their cars, their cab rides, and their apartments, then surely as their lifestyle and travel demands begin to cross with our product, they will feel a natural proclivity toward it.

On the flip side, if these industries don't self-regulate, they will draw increased scrutiny on all companies that utilize the sharing model, and we may fall under that category, despite our much more mature regulatory environment.

“The sharing economy marketplaces are bringing hundreds of millions of leisure shoppers looking for alternative accommodations. This is a great opportunity to reach a large number of prospects.”

— Sunil Aluvila, president and CEO, VacayStay Connect



**ALUVILA:** The shared economy is creating more awareness about alternative accommodations and timeshare resorts rank very high in that category. The timeshare industry's challenge always was to cost-effectively attract customers who have a high propensity to buy the product. The sharing economy marketplaces are bringing hundreds of millions of leisure shoppers looking for alternative accommodations. This is a great opportunity to reach a large number of prospects.

**NUSBAUM:** I know some people tend to be very protective: "They don't have rules and we do. Shame on them." Well, there was a time when people pointed at us in the same way. It is a natural iteration for the marketplace to get ahead of the regulatory environment. That will be harmonized.

**What could/should be addressed in order to create a more level playing field for traditional lodging, timesharing, and companies such as Airbnb and VRBO?**

**ALUVILA:** The biggest challenge is these are not public accommodations. They are private homes. So they don't meet a lot of the criteria that the public accommodations must have. It's new and legislation has not caught up with the changing business models, so laws are not there to protect the consumer in all these instances. There is a lot of work to be done to create a more level playing field. Based on the significant growth in consumer demand for alternative accommodations, it's clear that all these forms of accommodations will find a way to coexist.

**MILLER:** No question about that. What happens is these companies come on so fast and proliferate so quickly, it catches the regulatory agencies off guard. So if you look at an Airbnb for example, all the cities are now waking up and saying, "Whoa, are these places zoned for transient lodging? Are we collecting our hotel and lodging taxes on these bookings?"

Certainly, these cities don't like missing tax revenues so I think they're going to jump into the middle of these transactions pretty soon. Which won't kill the model, but just add some cost to it.

**SAFT:** A level playing field means everybody playing by the same rules. If regulators feel those rules are important for long-established and reputable businesses, then it is only fair that they either impose those same rules on new entrants, or lift restrictions that are currently unequal.

Ultimately, regulation is about safety and security, and I do not believe that asking for background checks, insurance requirements,

and attestation that providers are not violating any condominium, local, municipal, or state rules should be considered to be an outrageous request.

**NUSBAUM:** I believe that there is going to be a period of regulation, and that may be an opportunity for us. There may be some regulations that don't make sense anymore, and looking through the viewpoint of these new businesses might be an opportunity for us to shed unnecessary ones.

But if they are necessary for us, then I advocate for them to be necessary for them. And if there's a compelling reason to grandfather them out, then there needs to be huge disclosure. I could see 28-point type that says: "There is no inspection for fire and health safety.

Buyer Beware." "Our ability to control the keys is not within our purview. Buyer Beware."

**How can the vacation ownership industry capitalize on the success of the sharing economy?**

**SAFT:** The sharing economy is the ultimate validation of our business model. It should be used on every sales table as an example of what people want when they travel: the space and convenience of home. However, we have the added benefit of resort-like amenities, which further set us apart from traditional Airbnb lodging.

**MILLER:** I think the standard vacation home rental business can be complementary to the timeshare business. Because you have consumers seeking larger-than-traditional lodging accom-

modations in great resort areas, and willing to pay top dollar for them on a rental basis — and that's always been a good client for a traditional timeshare product.

**NUSBAUM:** I would not be surprised if five years from today, you didn't go to Airbnb and there's a whole category for timeshare. Already HomeAway and VRBO have a solution that puts timeshare product on their sites as inventory.

**ALUVILA:** Consumers who buy timeshare and vacation clubs fit the profile of customers who use the major vacation rental sites. We are working with vacation clubs to offer vacation homes as part of the product offering, similar to cruises and other leisure products that are part of their membership.

It's a good time to re-evaluate the vacation club product offering based on growing customer interest in sharing economy products. When consumers buy next-generation vacation club memberships, they will have little incentive to go outside the club system if their membership offers home rental as part of the program.



— Jared Saft, vice president of sales and marketing,  
Westgate Resorts



## What can businesses and individuals in the sharing economy learn from the timeshare industry?

**KISTNER:** I don't think it's what they can learn; it's what they *did* learn. It's an evolution of the timeshare concept. One of the competitive advantages is they're not spending the money to build it, so they're not incurring the expense of the hard asset, and they're benefiting more from the servicing aspect of the commercialization and movement of the transactions.

**BUCHALTER:** But I would say that one of the things they could learn is to be better service-oriented. I'll give you an example: We just recently got involved in taking over rental homes in Loreto Bay. The majority of those homes were under VRBO. The big difference we have over VRBO is that we're providing a concierge service and all the things that you would have if you actually owned a timeshare. So, for example, when the client calls to book the room, now they have a customer service agent who will help them book their transportation.

**NUSBAUM:** We are a model for the new sharing economy to realize that although harmonizing with the regulatory environment and paying your fair share may seem burdensome at first, ultimately it's a ticket to success.

**SAFT:** The sharing economy is in its infancy. It can certainly speed up its maturity by looking at some of the hard lessons learned through our four decades of work in the space. Taking on self-regulation as well as a conciliatory and cooperative attitude toward elected officials and the municipalities they represent would be great lessons learned from our business.

## What can we take away from the sharing economy?

**ALUVILA:** As times change, consumer behaviors also change. The timeshare industry should be willing to listen to consumers and understand their appetite for new products and the ways they want to consume or buy these products. I believe there is a great opportunity for the industry to reinvent itself by creating new product lines and processes to deliver next-generation membership products.

**SAFT:** The sharing economy has matured in less than five years due to, in no small part, a tremendous and well-developed information technology infrastructure. Our sector of the lodging space has typically lagged behind the other major tranches of the hospitality space

in terms of IT investment. If we want to take our business to the next level, we are looking at a roadmap — albeit an expensive one — on how to do it.

**MILLER:** I think they've mastered transaction simplicity. The ability to be on your mobile phone and book an Uber car or a home rental with HomeAway or VRBO — those transactions are simple and fast. And I would say the timeshare industry as a whole is way behind from a technologically enabling standpoint with their consumers.

Obviously, they've done a good job of having a base of people providing immediate feedback on their experience. So it's not just them telling customers that it's a good deal or a great place to stay or a great driver or what have you. Instead it's another customer telling them.

I think the timeshare industry could do a lot better at that — because we have a very satisfied owner base and there's an opportunity to allow that owner base to help communicate how great the product is to the open market.

**Have you, personally, turned to the sharing economy, whether lodging, car hire, or another service? If so, what was your experience like?**

**KISTNER:** For what it is, it's OK. That's not my style. I prefer a full-service resort.

**BUCHALTER:** I've done VRBO a couple of times and only in places where I didn't feel there was good-enough quality of the hotels.

My experience with booking and getting it was good. But I'd rather stay in a nice hotel.

**MILLER:** I'm a big fan of Uber. They're a great service — no cash, no tip, transparency of the driver, and everything else. I've not used any of the lodging services. Fortunately or unfortunately, I've got access to a lot of great resort areas with our product.

**ALUVILA:** I've stayed at multiple vacation rental properties. And was satisfied with the overall process — good management, great accommodations, and wonderful service.

**NUSBAUM:** I have used HomeAway, both as somebody putting inventory on there as well as somebody renting inventory. I've had mostly positive experiences. And I'm not even the demographic — I'm pushing 60. So I would encourage other old baby boomers like myself to get hip and check out the sharing economy. [1]



# Let the Sun Shine In

Bask in Savings, Protect the Environment, and Generate a Buzz  
With Use of Alternative Energy Sources



Sunshine is a staple of the vacation business. Few luxury amenities are as reliable, while requiring no capital outlay and zero maintenance. Fewer still can be enlisted to pay your electric bill. When just one hour of sunlight produces more energy than the world uses in a year, it makes no sense to surrender upward of 10 percent of gross revenue to electricity and other fossil fuels.

So, while vacationers bask on the beaches of Mexico's Riviera Maya or the ski slopes of Breckenridge, Colorado, timeshare resorts are using naturally recurring — or renewable — energy sources such as solar power to whittle away at expenses in key operating areas.

## Soaking up Savings

Breckenridge Grand Vacations chose to underline its deep dedication to sustainability by purchasing solar panels in two community-owned photovoltaic arrays developed and maintained by the Clean Energy Collective (CEC).

"The monetary credit that we receive for the solar energy has saved us 66 percent on our electricity bills since January 2014," says Jessica Hoover, sustainability manager for Breckenridge Grand Vacations. The 784,102 kilowatt hours (kWh) generated by the developer's solar panels more than offset the electricity consumed by the 88-employee corporate office in downtown Breckenridge, as well as the 35-room Breck Inn, a boutique hotel the company manages a mile away.

Karisma Hotels & Resorts has installed more than 1,000 rooftop solar panels at its resorts on Mexico's Riviera Maya. Solar boosts the efficiency of hybrid water heaters that run on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or propane, one of the most common alternative fuels used in the world.

"In the last few years, they have allowed us to reduce gas

ABOVE: The quieter inverter air conditioners used by Karisma reduce energy consumption by 30 percent. TOP: Breckenridge Grand Vacations' solar energy investment offsets the electricity consumed by its corporate offices and one of its properties.



A recent study found that commercial buildings that regularly benchmarked their energy performance with EPA's Energy Star Portfolio Manager tool cut their energy bills by 7 percent over three years.

consumption from 15 to 25 percent, providing hot water to all our guest rooms, swimming pools, and service areas," says Sasa Milojevic, vice president of operations for Karisma Hotels & Resorts.

Solar panels also illuminate the company's 80,730-square-foot (7,500 square meters) hydroponic greenhouse on the grounds of El Dorado Royale, a Spa Resort by Karisma. The Rainforest Alliance-certified greenhouse and adjacent 3.7-acre (1.5 hectares) orchard deliver organic herbs, vegetables, and fruits directly to the kitchens and spas of Karisma's Riviera Maya resorts each month.

### **New Path to Customer Satisfaction**

"By being more efficient in the operation of our properties, all our efforts, time, and resources are focused on our guest experience, generating a direct return on investment, which is reflected by our guest satisfaction," Milojevic says. "We see on our social media and by return customers that this is something very important for them."

A 2013 survey of 1,300 U.S. travelers by TripAdvisor revealed that while 62 percent of the respondents often or always considered the environment when choosing hotels, 64 percent reported that they rarely or never felt informed about whether hotels were truly eco-friendly. TripAdvisor remedied that by recognizing TripAdvisor GreenLeaders. The program was developed in partnership with Energy Star, the U.S. Green Building Council, and the United Nations Environment Program to award thousands of U.S. hotels bronze to platinum badges based on environmental practices, including the use of energy-efficient appliances, solar panels, and electric-car charging stations. Other booking sites, including Travelocity and Hotels.com, also enable users to search for green properties.

### **The Case for Solar**

When it comes to renewable energy generated by sunlight, wind, water, geothermal heat, and organic materials, solar is often the logical first choice for hotels and resorts. Solar power can be more abundant and consistent than wind. It is quiet, relatively inconspicuous, and easy to maintain. Today's more durable panels can stand up to hurricane-force winds, and are efficient in hot and cool climates. In fact, Germany, which shares the same latitude as Calgary, in Alberta, Canada, was Europe's top solar producer in 2014.

Best of all, installing solar panels has gotten less expensive, especially with federal, state, and local incentives such as tax credits, rebates, and free-interest loans. The Solar Industries Association reported the average price of a completed commercial photovoltaic project in the second quarter of 2014 had dropped more than 45 percent since 2012. Most systems have a 25-year manufacturer's guarantee. Utility-grade panels used in community power arrays last twice as long. And while payback periods vary according to the climate, site, local energy rates, and available financial incentives, the savings and environmental impact are immediate.

Breckenridge Grand Vacations spent just over US\$1 million on its 1,151-panel system. After the company breaks even, the solar panels are expected to save almost US\$1 million over 20 years.

### **A Bright Future**

"In 1977, a solar panel cost about US\$77 a watt, and today we're under a dollar a watt. That is a dramatic reduction," says Roger Sherman, managing partner of Ecocentro Solar Cancún & Riviera Maya, serving Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula. "I have clients who say, 'I'm going to wait until it comes down again.' My argument to them today is, 'How long do you want to wait? A year? Because, this is how much you're going to save in the next year.' As a resort developer, you can't be focusing on immediate gratification — you have to be thinking long-term."

The promise of enhanced storage capability promises quicker paybacks. In 2015, Tesla Motors introduced the Powerpack, a utility-scale rechargeable lithium ion battery adapted from the technology used in its electric cars that is designed to store energy for off-grid and supplemental power systems. Multiple units can be connected to create a capacity for 10 megawatt hours (MWh).

The sun's energy can also be used to develop other products. Sherman's company plans to distribute products that disinfect drinking and swimming pool water using the sun's ultraviolet (UV) rays.

"What happens, in our experience, is pools get overdosed with chlorine, because the pool guys prefer to err on the side of caution," Sherman says. The UV-based system continually tests the water, administering chemicals only when needed. As a result, the use of chlorine — which studies have shown to be as toxic as secondhand smoke — can be reduced up to 80 percent."

### **First Steps**

"One of the misconceptions about solar and other renewables is that you have to switch over completely, so that renewables cover 100 percent of your needs," Sherman says. "In most cases, that's not only not recommended, it's not practical." He recommends identifying key projects, focusing on areas where reducing energy consumption would have the most overall impact.

The first step may be to not over-think it.

"Although sometimes the use of renewable energy is something that requires a lot of technology or investment, we have discovered in the last few years that we can start using solar energy in the most simple way possible," Milojevic says. "You can just change the orientation of the architecture and design open spaces, illuminated by natural sunlight with natural ventilation." New builds can be designed with south-facing windows and building materials that absorb and slowly release the sun's heat.

"Renewable energy does get a lot of attention, because it's sexy — and it should. It's very important," Hoover says. "But, when you look at the overall impact, measures taken to improve energy efficiency are just as important as renewables. They often have a faster return on investment and they are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by a building."

### **The Big Picture**

Indeed, experts say, solar should be just one component of a much broader, big-picture approach to sustainability that balances renewable

energy with the use of superefficient, clean energies.

Karisma's corporate Passion for Sustainability is a smorgasbord of solutions touching every aspect of hotel operations, from air-conditioning guest rooms to the purchasing process, designed to guarantee that new equipment and systems are as efficient and environmentally friendly as possible.

"Sustainability in our hotels is about changing the decision-making process at every level with only one goal in mind, and that is to be more competitive as a company every day and by using all our resources in the most efficient way possible," Milojevic says. "It is not only about savings, it is also about strategic planning, about customer satisfaction, and the long-term commitment to the sustainable development of all the destinations where we operate our hotels."

Three years ago, Karisma replaced the traditional air-conditioning system in the rooms and service areas of its hotels in Mexico, Jamaica, Colombia, and Croatia with high-efficiency inverter technology. Unlike traditional air conditioners that regulate temperature using a compressor that is either working at maximum capacity or switched off entirely, inverter air conditioners eliminate stop-and-start cycles, reducing energy consumption by 30 percent on average. They are also quieter and run on eco-friendly refrigerants.

## Getting Creative

Karisma's sustainable practices run the gamut from tried-and-true LED lighting to an innovative on-site greenhouse. "Having our own greenhouse close to our kitchens gives us a better-quality product and we've reduced 96 percent of the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions associated with transportation of these products," says Milojevic.

Recently, Karisma hotels have been recovering 60 percent of the vegetable oil used for cooking to be converted to biodiesel that can run machines designed to operate on normal diesel fuel.

"During the last few months, we have started a series of tests to use it on small machines, and to supervise its performance, in order to see if we can include it in our daily operation for all our properties," Milojevic says. "It is not enough to be as efficient as we need to be, so we need to combine the technology with a very comprehensive training program for our staff. Also, preventive and predictive software and other control mechanisms allow us to guarantee the correct use of those technologies."

Each Karisma hotel has its own sustainability department that organizes training for every employee, including presentations by energy-efficiency experts throughout the year.

## Measuring for Success

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 30 cents of every dollar spent on energy in commercial buildings is wasted through inefficiencies. Benchmarking energy performance is an important part of the measurement process.

In 2012, the homeowners' association of Breckenridge Grand Vacation's Timber Lodge decided to invest US\$1 million in efficiency upgrades to the property, based on an in-depth energy audit performed by a local environmental consulting firm. Improvements included installing high-efficiency boilers and a boiler-control system, updating the heating system in the garage, and retrofitting garage lighting with motion sensors. Local utility rebates also led the HOA to replace more than 90 percent of light bulbs with LED lights.

"The savings are really incredible," Hoover reports. "The consulting firm that completed the energy audit has guaranteed an annual savings of 257,000 kWh of electricity and 114,188 therms of natural gas. This



Windows placed to provide for light and heat can take further advantage of solar power and enhance overall energy efficiency.

will result in savings of US\$88,819 every year for the next six years."

A recent study found that commercial buildings that regularly benchmarked their energy performance with EPA's Energy Star Portfolio Manager tool cut their energy bills by 7 percent over three years (2.4 percent per year on average). The online tool can measure and track energy and water consumption, as well as greenhouse gas emissions in a secure environment. The key is to start small.

## An Evolving Business Model

"There can be a lot of benefit realized from taking advantage of the low-hanging fruit," Hoover says. "And don't be afraid to go back and change things if they're not working the way you had intended them to. Nothing is set in stone. You can always tweak a little bit to make sure you're having the best impact that you can."

Those initial savings generate excitement that often takes on a life of its own. "It may be purely economic when they made the decision," Sherman says of his customers. "But then they start thinking a little bit more about the ecological impact. We give them an estimate of how much CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are being reduced because of their solar installation and we translate that into how many trees you would have to plant a year to reduce that amount of CO<sub>2</sub>. Most people find that interesting."

Hoover agrees that the future looks bright for resorts open to renewable energy sources and efficiencies that will power prosperity without depleting the natural resources that have become part of their brand. "We are fortunate enough to have a local nonprofit that can come in and do smaller-scale energy audits and provide guidance. There's also a lot of information online about how resorts and hotels can start a sustainability program," she says. "As we learn more, we're able to incorporate sustainability more and more into our operations. We will work to reduce our overall energy usage. And we will keep considering options for alternatives." [ ]

See page 2 for currency conversions.

Joyce Hadley Copeland, based in Tucson, Arizona, contributes regularly to travel and hospitality publications and websites.

# VACATION INDUSTRY REVIEW **Digital** Magazine



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# GIVE THE PEOPLE WHAT THEY WANT.

Choice is king. Options are no longer an option — they're a must. Club Interval Gold® delivers. It's the best of traditional timeshare combined with the flexibility of points-based programs. Owners can trade up, trade down, and take long weekends all around.

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## BRING MORE TO THE TABLE:

Club Interval Gold helps close sales and keeps members engaged year-round.

**AND WHEN NEW OWNERS BECOME ENGAGED MEMBERS, WE ALL SUCCEED.**





## 40 AND COUNTING

You don't stay in business for 40 years by accident. It takes a host of intangibles and a team of people committed to a shared mission to sustain commerce for that period of time. Or so it has for Interval International.

In 1976, an accountant and a lawyer set out to create a timeshare exchange company. Challenging enough to start a business at any time, let alone during an economic downturn, in a nascent industry that had yet to overcome some PR problems.

But from the beginning, Interval International has aspired to thrive — standing firm through economic heaves and spasms, seeing the industry through a reputation turnaround as regulation and customer protections were put in place, and coming into its own as part of a publicly traded company in 2008.

"Interval has been part of the brain trust that has shaped our industry's product, regulation, business model, and vision for the future," reflects Howard Nusbaum, president and CEO of the American Resort Development Association. "If there is an issue impacting timeshare anywhere in the world, you can count on an Interval International leader to be involved."

Peter Yesawich, vice president of MMGY Global, agrees: "One of

Interval's greatest strengths is its thought leadership in the vacation ownership category."

The highlights that populate the Interval timeline have been lauded aplenty. How consumer membership tripled within two years of its beginnings, the introduction of the industry's first quality recognition program in 1982, the launch of the first enhanced membership program from an exchange company in 1987, the affiliation wave of renowned hospitality brands, and numerous product and program launches along the way.

So what does it take for a company to stay relevant, improve, expand, and innovate for 40 years? For Interval International, it takes great resort affiliates (approximately 3,000) and loyal and satisfied members (about 2 million). It takes a commitment to technology and the willingness to invest in the tools necessary to remain competitive in today's ever-changing marketplace. And it takes a team of professionals dedicated to excellence. Here are some of their stories.



“We always have access to the most senior leaders, at all times, and that’s truly appreciated. We’ve always felt that we had a common interest backed up by a common belief system.”

— **Sergio Rivera**, president of the Americas, **Starwood Hotels and Resorts Worldwide**; and CEO, **Starwood Vacation Ownership**, an Interval affiliate since 2000



**CRAIG M. NASH**, CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENT, AND CEO  
OF INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL'S PARENT COMPANY, INTERVAL LEISURE GROUP  
member of the Interval team since 1982

## THE VISIONARIES

# LEADING BY EXAMPLE

**His Interval Story:** Even before he became an employee, Craig Nash was an integral part of the Interval landscape. In 1978, the young lawyer went to work for the company's law firm, Davis & Langer, P.A. Four years later, Interval recruited him to be director of regulatory affairs. A fervent proponent of industry regulation, he played a key role in laying the groundwork — including the development of the Model Timeshare Act — for constructive timeshare legislation that has shaped today's vacation ownership environment.

Nash has plenty of other achievements under his belt: He's led the company through multiple ownership transitions, major systems overhauls, international expansion, and the affiliation of some of the world's largest hospitality brands. By 1993, he was Interval's president and CEO — the same year he was recognized as the ARDA Resort Industry Executive of the Year. As Robert A. Miller, former executive with Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation, observes, "Craig has worked to help build the timeshare industry, and I have had the extraordinary opportunity to work with him as a business partner, colleague, and ARDA member."

Indeed, Nash attests that the job's been a demanding one — but there's been time for fun, too. Says Steve Weisz, president and CEO of Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation, "We've shared the opportunity to hear some of the greatest rock 'n' roll bands in the world during Interval's Party With a Cause. I enjoy standing with Craig as we both attempt to relive our younger years."

Ask Nash what he attributes Interval's success to, and he is sure to mention the employees. "Without a dedicated staff who've responded and adapted to a changing environment over the past 40 years, we wouldn't be the vibrant entity we are today. That includes the individuals still with us — and those who've come and gone." He also credits the company's developer partners for providing its members with quality accommodations.


In 2008, when Interval spun off from its parent company, IAC, Interval Leisure Group (ILG) was born and took its place on the NASDAQ exchange. At that juncture, Nash became chairman, president, and CEO of ILG, of which Interval International today is one of seven operating businesses.

"Interval has always worked to partner with its customers to find ways to build value for each other. The focus has been on service but also leveraging each of the business's strengths to create a program that works for both parties."

— **Steve Weisz, president and CEO, Marriott Vacations Worldwide Corporation, an Interval affiliate since 1990**

**In His Words:** "One of the achievements I'm most proud of is having navigated the company through six changes in ownership. A corporate transition can be a challenging experience — but with the leadership of a tenured team, we've turned each transformation into an opportunity to advance and strengthen. Today, as part of a publicly traded entity, Interval is well-positioned to continue to provide the cutting-edge service its two constituencies have come to count on over the past 40 years."



A woman with long brown hair, wearing a pink long-sleeved top and grey trousers, is sitting on a black leather armchair. She is holding a black clipboard in her hands. The background consists of several white columns, suggesting a classical or institutional setting.

“Interval International ... treats every resort as if it were a preferred customer. It has always sought to accommodate our needs by providing unflagging assistance to our sales and customer service departments. And it has also professionally and expertly helped our owners achieve their vacation dreams.”

— **Hillie Meyers, president, Star Island Development, an Interval affiliate since 1976**





**JEANETTE E. MARBERT**, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND  
DIRECTOR, INTERVAL LEISURE GROUP  
member of the Interval team since 1984

## THE VISIONARIES

# RETURN ON INTEGRITY

**Her Interval Story:** Jeanette Marbert joined Interval International as corporate counsel between what's been described as the entrepreneurial and sales-driven stages of the company's evolution. She remembers it as a time when Interval and the industry were absorbed in building a legislative framework in the U.S. "I learned a lot from Craig Nash about the importance of a regulatory foundation," she recalls. "That was a big piece of the first years of my career."

But that certainly wasn't the only piece. In fact, by the late '90s, as the exchange network expanded and membership continued to grow, Marbert's responsibilities shifted to the business side of the company. As chief operating officer of Interval International, she became a key force in building on an infrastructure that delivered the highest-quality vacation to the consumer.

Marbert has always taken an active part in business negotiations. "Jeanette is known to be a skilled strategist," observes Nash. "But she also brings integrity and respect to negotiations." Marbert points out that Interval strives to "fulfill what we're putting on the table," and part of the corporate culture is to "under-promise and over-deliver; to live up to our contractual promises and go above and beyond that."

Client experience proves that out: "We're very sensitive with whom we do business, especially when they interface with our owners," says Sergio Rivera, CEO of Starwood Vacation Ownership. "We represent a high-quality product and we want our partners to have an equal concern for customer service. Interval does an exceptional job of that."

In 2008 when the company went public, Marbert became chief operating officer of Interval Leisure Group. She continues to lead with the same focus on over-delivering and commitment to quality and customer service.

"One of Interval's most important strengths is the length of service and dedication of the management team. These people by and large have been continually serving the industry for decades. That's important in terms of continuity of the relationships."

— **Jeffrey B. Stern**, partner and co-chair of global hospitality, **Holland & Knight LLP**, associated with Interval since 1983

**In Her Words:** "For any business — more so today than ever — you need to be listening to what your customers want, even if it doesn't always fit with what you have planned. You need to be flexible and to respond to your customers' needs. That is what Interval has tried to be from the beginning: an organization that provides customized solutions for customers, and thinks beyond a one-size-fits-all environment. The company continues to succeed in that endeavor."



“Interval has provided additional credibility to our industry, and provided more product value through sales programs and the global exchange network with other top-rated resorts.”

— **Ken Taylor, owner, Spinnaker Resorts, an Interval affiliate since 2004**

“The many resources Interval has to offer its members — from how to make the most of their timeshare ownership to the many services and product offers — benefit our owners and value proposition.”

— **Jon Fredricks, president, Welk Resorts, an Interval affiliate since 1984**



DAVID C. GILBERT, PRESIDENT, INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL  
member of the Interval team since 1987

## THE VISIONARIES

# FORGING A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

“Interval has been a great partner for many years, and we appreciate their tremendous contribution to the timeshare industry over the past 40 years.”

— David Siegel, founder and CEO, Westgate Resorts, an Interval affiliate since 1991

**His Interval Story:** “David doesn’t give up. When he makes a commitment, whether to a client, a member, an employee, or an idea, he sees it through.” And, according to Craig Nash, that dogged determination and unwavering dedication to the best interests of the resort developers and their owners have defined David Gilbert’s contributions to the company’s success.

As president of Interval International, Gilbert leverages his vast experience and considerable connections to steer the company, guided not just by constancy but by vision and vigor. He played a meaningful role in resort sales and marketing efforts, contributing to the company’s exponential growth in resort partnerships. During his tenure as executive vice president of resort sales and marketing, he developed a dynamic team of experienced professionals. A team that built brand relations and nurtured long-term affiliations.

Even in times of exuberant industry expansion, Gilbert had the foresight to reach out and attract new investors to the field. In 1998, he spearheaded the establishment of what became known as the Shared Ownership Investment Conference. Today, the event that brings together industry veterans and prospective entrants alike is hosted in locations throughout the world.

Gilbert sees a direct connection between technology and an enviable level of member satisfaction. He nurtures an environment where high-tech advancements create more opportunities to touch and serve members and enhance their vacation-planning experiences.

Gilbert points to another key to Interval’s success: “We don’t take a cookie-cutter approach to doing business,” he says, noting that the staff takes time learning about its developer clients, and then tailors resources to best meet their needs. “Obviously, if our clients do well, Interval does, too.”

**In His Words:** “One of the accomplishments that gratifies me most is the role I played in building the Interval team. Being as objective as possible, Interval has assembled some of the best and brightest in the shared ownership industry, and I’m proud to work with them. The company’s goal has always been to capture market share of the *quality* segment of our industry, and the Interval team has had great success in achieving that objective!”



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THE MARKET MAKERS

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# GROWING GLOBAL



**DARREN ETTRIDGE** (since 2000), senior vice president, resort sales and business development, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia  
**BRYAN TEN BROEK** (since 1995), senior vice president, resort sales and marketing, U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean  
**MARCOS AGOSTINI** (since 1995), senior vice president, resort sales and business development, Latin America



“Customer service is number one, and my experience with Interval International is that they are very focused on customer service and they understand its importance.”

— **Martin Tolan, senior vice president, sales and marketing, Anantara Vacation Club, an Interval affiliate since 2014**

A beach retreat in Mexico. A high-rise just a walk from the Vegas casinos. A sunny villa on the coast of Spain. By far, what makes the exchange concept most appealing is access to a pool of resorts and a diversity of vacation experiences.

In 1976, Interval International started with one resort — Sanibel Beach Club in Florida. Today, Interval’s network is supported by offices in 16 countries, and consists of approximately 3,000 resorts in over 80 nations. Resorts that, according to Julio Llibre, president of Coral Hotels and Resorts in the Dominican Republic, “add prestigious quality that has helped to elevate the credibility of our offering to prospects.”

To build and nurture such a network requires boots on the ground — or in the air, as the case may be. Interval’s resort sales and services team racks up plenty of frequent-flier miles and hotel-stay points. Take Marcos Agostini: His travel schedule to and from Latin America is so heavy that his 10-year passport can get filled up in just three years.

But it takes more than tireless travel to sustain Interval’s robust resort network. It requires a team with a global outlook. It demands a staff that considers its affiliated resorts more than just clients. “For more than 20 years, Interval has been a strategic partner,” says Carlos Arango, president of Constructora Bolivar, based in Colombia. “In addition to our work relationship, we consider them long-time friends.”

The resort sales and service professionals champion the best interests of the resort community, pushing for ever-advancing technology to boost efficiency. Supporting market research. Working with industry associations to promote a positive regulatory environment. And through Interval-hosted Shared Ownership Investment Conferences, broadening awareness and providing new entrants information and access to the resources they need to successfully become part of the industry.

“Interval International has been a true partner during the past successful years, providing the Middle East and North Africa members with high-end exchange and travel services, given the fact that these members are always looking for services above and beyond the usual.”

— **Al Mohannad Sharafuddin, chairman, Arabian Falcon Holidays, associated with Interval since 1995**

“Interval was immediately synonymous with quality — as was Mariner. Both companies were timeshare pioneers, and supported each other in establishing shared ownership as a viable real estate/vacation product.”

— **Bob Taylor, principal, Mariner Advisory Group, Inc., an Interval affiliate since 1976**

### Sharing the Good News

1998 was the year of the first timeshare resort investment conference in Barbados. Since then, what today is known as the International Shared Ownership Investment Conference has been held in Miami, Rome, Dubai, Beijing, São Paulo, Lima, and other cities around the world.



### Strike up the Brand

In 1990, Marriott was the first major brand to affiliate with Interval International. Interval has attracted some of the world’s most familiar brands, including Hyatt, Westin, Sheraton, and Accor, as well as high-quality independent developers across the globe.

### Proprietary Research

“Interval’s member profile studies of markets throughout the world are critical to our clients, who use the information about likes, preferences, and behaviors to retain their owners and market to new prospects.”

— Darren Ettridge



### Growth Chart

“As The Quality Vacation Exchange Network, Interval doesn’t try to be the biggest — we’re much more satisfied with being the best. But we’re proud of the depth and breadth of our resort network, which has shown steady growth since resort number one.” — Bryan Ten Broek

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THE ENGINEERS

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# TECHNICALLY SPEAKING



**MARIE LEE** (since 2000), senior vice president, chief information officer  
**VIVIAN MORE** (since 1995), vice president, IT shared services  
**DAVID VALDES** (since 1987), vice president, application services  
**ROBERT GAYNOR** (since 2007), vice president, technology services





"It's good to see that Interval stays on top of the technology and quickly invests in any new methods that create a better experience for the members."

— **Owen Perry, president, The Villa Group, an Interval affiliate since 1985**

"When I came to the Interval office in 1978, an employee was sitting at a desk with two shoeboxes and index cards. To make an exchange, he took a card out of one box and put it into the other box. I would say Interval's technology has come a long way since then!"

— **Richard Sutton (first affiliated with Interval in 1978), chairman and CEO, Royal Resorts Caribbean**

"Interval is at the forefront of technological innovation within our industry, especially in recent times utilizing the mobile platform."

— **Craig Wood, CEO, Accor Vacation Club, an Interval affiliate since 2000**

**User-friendly. Easy. Fast. Seamless.** When it comes to providing support technology, these descriptions are much more relevant than a lot of tech-babble. Because today's customers don't merely prize efficiency and immediacy — they expect it.

"A true service-oriented business emphasizes results above flash," says Marie Lee. "And our goal is to make things better for our customers and clients." Standing behind that commitment is a staff of professionals with a range of top-level skills and long-term tenure with Interval — a staff that works tirelessly to deliver.

Attention to technology has been an integral component of Interval International's service creed since the industry's earliest days. In 1980, the company introduced an IBM computer system to facilitate exchange activity and operations. At the time, that move was welcomed as revolutionary and forward-looking.

Today, Interval's iServices, a multimillion-dollar platform using a Service Oriented Architecture framework, allows Interval to meet customer needs faster and more efficiently and to power programs for resorts in a more user-friendly manner and with greater functionality than ever.

It means that Interval can give its resort partners secure access to valuable data about their owners, and enables them to enroll and renew members; deposit, verify, and release owner units; and much more. The sharing of member information and operations functions means Interval and its affiliated resorts can act on members' needs immediately.

"The system positions us for the future," says David Valdes. "It allows us to quickly create new processes and applications for an ever-changing environment."

User-friendly. Easy. Fast. Seamless. Simple terms that belie the complexity of a sophisticated system that keeps operations running smoothly for Interval International's members and resort clients.



### Internet Presence

Interval International was the first major exchange company to establish an Internet presence, in 1996.

### Celebrating Silver

Upon reaching the 25-year milestone in 2001, Interval introduced online exchange. Today, IntervalWorld.com is also the place to go for Getaways, travel services, enrollment, cruises, and other activities.

### Smooth Sailing

In 2008, the popular cruise exchange launched online, making it easier than ever for upgraded members to trade their week or points for a cruise.

### Social Mobility

Interval's mobile website and app expanded access for Interval members, who indicate an increasing preference for mobile connectivity. In 2014, Interval won the ARDA ACE Innovator award for its Exchange Tracker.

“Interval provided invaluable information to help Hyatt develop its points-based product. Their technology allows for Hyatt members to exchange with Hyatt Residence Club points, making for smooth transactions. It’s served us all well.”

— **John Burlingame**, president, Hyatt Vacation Ownership, an Interval affiliate since 1994



**MICHELLE DUCHAMP** (since 1998), vice president, business development  
**KEVIN WUTZLER** (since 1990), vice president, inventory revenue management  
**SHARON FREED** (since 2005), senior vice president, consumer marketing

## THE INNOVATORS

# GET WITH THE PROGRAM

**Necessity isn't the only mother of invention.** Sometimes, the desire to take something that's already great and make it even better brings forth transformational innovations. Programs and products that don't just measure up to the status quo, but push beyond expectations.

And pushing beyond expectations is a defining characteristic of Interval International's above-and-beyond philosophy. "Sure, vacation ownership and the exchange benefit make the perfect match," observes Sharon Freed. "But Interval has built its reputation on sweetening the marriage even further in a multitude of ways."

How? Through membership options that offer choice, such as Club Interval Gold®, which allows weeks-based owners to convert their vacation time to points for additional flexibility. And even through trial programs, marketing incentives, and nonbuyer benefits such as Leisure Time Passport®, which creates just one more opportunity to touch the timeshare prospect. All are designed to enhance vacation ownership: more travel opportunities, more vacation flexibility, more perks and privileges.

Innovation also comes in the form of a state-of-the-art, technology-driven inventory management system. The IBM Advanced Analytics SPSS Modeler is capable of forecasting inventory and more exactly managing supply to "ensure that we provide the right piece of inventory to the right customer at the right time," according to Kevin Wutzler.

*Necessity* may be the mother of invention in most cases. But at Interval International, it's the drive to deliver extraordinary service that gives birth to groundbreaking programs and products.

"Interval developed a customized program for Mariner purchasers and owners that was tailored to our market and owner demographics. This, in turn, facilitated sales and member enrollment. Working together, the companies made one plus one equal three."

— **Allen G. Ten Broek, president and CEO, Mariner Advisory Group, Inc., an Interval affiliate since 1976**

"Interval has been a moving force in the growth and success of the vacation ownership industry."

— **Michael Marder, partner and owner, Greenspoon & Marder, associated with Interval International since 1981**



### Raising the Bar

Interval was the first exchange company to offer an enhanced membership program in 1987. Today, there are four membership classifications, including Interval Gold®, Interval Platinum®, and Club Interval Gold. More than 40 percent of Interval members enjoy upgraded memberships.



### Something for Everyone

Leisure Time Passport offers resorts a way to keep connected to nonbuyers and create another opportunity to close the deal. Interval's first nonbuyer program was introduced in 1995.

### On Point

"In 2010, Interval launched its weeks-to-points Club Interval Gold, not only allowing members more flexibility and choice, but injecting new life into inventory at legacy resorts and providing a powerful point-of-sale product." — Michelle DuChamp



“To be able to show consumers [with the Interval Exchange Tracker] the exchanges that have occurred in the past 24 hours is incredibly powerful.”

— **David Stroeve**, vice president of sales operations, Breckenridge Grand Vacations, an Interval affiliate since 1988



**MADLINE BERGES** (since 2001), vice president, e-commerce and digital marketing  
**AILIS CABRERA** (since 1995), assistant vice president and creative director  
**RALPH FIOL** (since 2001), assistant vice president, digital innovation

## THE COMMUNICATORS

# TECH MESSAGING

**The impact of mobile on the way people share and receive information can't be overstated.** Customers check online ratings from their phone while touring a resort. Salespeople showcase the merits of vacation ownership on an iPad as part of their presentation. Owners take vacation photos and instantaneously text them to friends and family. Indeed, everyone's turning to their devices.

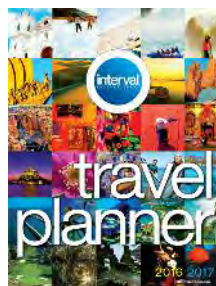
Whether riding the wave of the mobile movement (today) or being the first exchange company to establish an Internet presence (1996), Interval International pursues the most cutting-edge means of connecting with members and clients. Such endeavors are carried out through collaborative effort among diverse departments and disciplines.

Interval's e-commerce group, for example, stays on top of digital marketing opportunities on the most widely used social media sites, broadening reach and stimulating interaction with both members and the greater population — all prospective vacation owners.

The IT team engineers sales support products that are easily accessed via mobile devices. The revolutionary Interval Sales Tool Kit reinforces the timeshare message.

And the creative services team ensures that the visual and editorial execution for media old and new meets the image standard. "The colors, fonts, logos, and graphics all come together to convey the content and the brand in the most powerful way," says Ailis Cabrera. "Whether the message appears in print or online, it's essential that the viewer be completely clear that they're reading a message from Interval International."

Bottom line: Interval International may speak to its constituencies through many channels. But the message is consistently timely, dynamic, and presented in a format that the recipients respond to.



### Away With Words

Interval's print communications have come a long way since the first *Vacation Planner & Directory*, published in 1981. The brand-new *Travel Planner* is packed with activities, attractions, day-trips, and all the trip-planning details that speak to the needs of the member-owner.

### Social Studies

"Nearly 90 percent of Interval members get travel information from online research — that's what Interval's most recent study supports. On Community, members talk to members, tap one another for recommendations, and share vacation experiences." — Madeline Berges



### Tools of the Trade

"Response to our Sales Tool Kit app was overwhelmingly positive from the beginning. But we kept hearing that we needed to make the sales presentation customizable. We listened, and the Workspace

feature — now with centralized authoring to help you control the message — makes this the best version of STK yet." — Ralph Fiol

### Interval HD

Reliable, resourceful, and appealing content at the Interval HD video channel harnesses the power of film to bring the viewer into the world of shared ownership.

"Owners are excited to learn about the new technology that is available to them. To have this technology for our resorts and our owners is an absolute game changer and is helping push our industry forward."

— **Jared Saft, vice president, Westgate Resorts, an Interval affiliate since 1991**

"In the past four or five years, Interval has really moved forward with technologies that help with sales and marketing. And we are benefiting from that with our current sales and marketing. Our close percentages have never been higher and I think a lot of that is due to the interactive things we can show them from Interval."

— **David Corson, president, DFC Associates, Inc., an Interval affiliate since 1978**



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THE CUSTOMER CHAMPIONS

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# AT YOUR SERVICE



**LORI CARD-KING** (since 1985), vice president of quality assurance  
**JANICE ANDERSON-PEARNE** (since 1989), vice president of client services and operations, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia  
**SORAYA GONZALES** (since 1989), assistant vice president of resort assistance  
**RAUL ESTRADA** (since 1987), senior vice president of operations





“Interval and its employees are very much a part of the team at King’s Creek. Everyone knows and has access to our Interval representatives, which is a huge asset to us as an independent developer.”

— **Kevin Jones, president and CEO, King’s Creek Plantation, an Interval affiliate since 2000**

**There is no one department at Interval International that handles customer service issues.**

That’s because every Interval employee is considered a champion of customer satisfaction, whether for approximately 2 million member families or the developers and employees of about 3,000 affiliated resorts worldwide. As Roy Peires, chairman of CLC World, observes, “As far as reaching and speaking to someone at Interval, it is easy. They are very attentive to our needs. We have direct access to everybody. Our relationship with the people is one of the biggest assets to partnering with Interval.”

Interval employees are adept at serving two constituencies. Supporting each fulfills the needs and interests of both groups. Resorts that enjoy technical and logistical customer support better serve their owners. And members who are well-taken-care-of by Interval’s vacation advisers remain more engaged and loyal owners.

Interval is keenly focused on advanced technology that supports products and programs. But high-tech is of little value to a business if not driven by what’s most important: establishing strong, long-term relationships; treating each member and client as if he or she were the *only* one.

And this service ranges from day-to-day situations to extraordinary circumstances. “There have been times when our members have been adversely affected by natural disasters,” recalls Craig Wood, CEO of Accor Vacation Club. “Over the years, Interval has come to the rescue of our members, providing alternative accommodation, adjusting reservation dates, and more.”

That Interval International relies on state-of-the-art technology to serve its customers is a given. But more importantly, that technology gives Interval employees the means to provide members and developer partners with the ultimate in customer care.

“The beginning of our relationship was built on trust and support in 1985. With several hundred memberships sold and being left without an exchange company, Interval International stepped in and assumed all of these memberships and serviced our members.”

— **Fernando Gonzalez Corona, president, The Villa Group, an Interval affiliate since 1985**

“The people are what make Interval great. They have good chemistry and camaraderie amongst themselves and those they interact with. They value the relationship they have had with me personally, as well as with the companies I’ve represented over the past 25 years.”

— **James Casey, senior vice president of vacation ownership, Capital One, associated with Interval International since 1993**

**Operations Made EASy**

“The Exchange Access System (EASy) was designed to give resorts access to their owners’ deposits and exchange information. This way, they know who is coming to their resort as soon as the member is confirmed, allowing opportunity for personal contact. Just another way we make things easier for both our clients and our members.” — Soraya Gonzales

**Service Spoken Here**

From Tagalog and Thai in Singapore to English and Afrikaans in Cape Town, more than two dozen languages are spoken at Interval International’s offices in 16 countries around the globe.

**Satisfied Customers**

“91.6 percent. That’s the average customer satisfaction level of Interval members who responded to a customer service survey after completing a phone transaction with Interval’s Miami Member-Services Center in 2015. We’re very proud of that level of service.” — Lori Card-King

# Don't Just Tell Them — Show Them

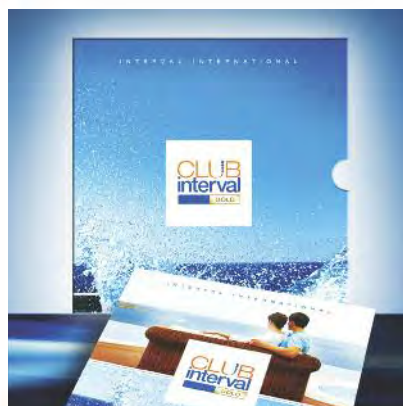
The Interval Sales Tool Kit app and our other digital offerings engage your prospects in the sales process, giving you every edge necessary to close the deal.



When you partner with Interval, everyone wins.

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By J.B. Bissell



WILLOWBROOK AT LAKE HARMONY



# Poconos Mainstay Gets a Makeover

There are plenty of vacation ownership properties with colorful-origin stories. From famous guests and owners to serendipitous construction circumstances to the occasional tragedy giving rise to a bigger and better development, and ultimately a more meaningful all-around project. In terms of pure history, though, few narratives can compete with **Split Rock Resort**.

Some 300 million years ago (give or take), massive glaciers crunched their way across the northern U.S. and Canada, creating lake beds, ravines, and all sorts of other interesting topography. One of the last of these Earth-changing ice flows was the Wisconsin Glacial Stage, which inched its way through eastern Pennsylvania approximately 70,000 years ago (again, give or take) and left in its wake a gaping fracture in an otherwise solid sandstone formation. According to legend, that very split rock is the namesake of what is now one of the Poconos' most well-known timeshare resorts.

Split Rock's evolution, however, is far from complete. In fact, as compelling as the reported connection to prehistoric time is, the company's most exciting moment may be happening right now. Stabilis Capital, a New York-based investment firm, recently purchased the resort collection — which includes The Galleria at Split Rock, Westwood at Split Rock, Willowbrook at Lake Harmony, and Mountain Laurel Resort and Spa. Stabilis installed the team at Boutique Real Estate Advisors (BREA) to oversee both refurbishment projects and day-to-day operations.

"Over the past year, new ownership has been committed to repositioning the resort to be the best-in-class family vacation location in the region," says Jay DiGiulio, president of BREA. "An extensive capital improvement plan was launched during 2014, with millions of dollars

being invested in the resort thus far. The enhancements are continuing, with more amenities being updated in order to provide guests, timeshare owners, and visitors the best experience possible."

## Oooohh, the Amenities!

That experience certainly is comprehensive. The Galleria, Westwood, and Willowbrook complexes all are situated around Lake Harmony on more than 1,200 acres (486 hectares) of prototypical Pocono Mountains property. Mountain Laurel is located a short 13-mile (21 kilometers) drive away outside of White Haven. All together, they provide "virtually every amenity a vacationer would wish to access," says DiGiulio.

Lake Harmony itself is a centerpiece, and a seasonal hotbed of activity, with various water sports, fishing, a sandy beach, and boat rentals available. Other fun-time features include indoor and outdoor pools, an arcade, eight-lane cosmic bowling center, first-run movie theater, indoor and outdoor sport courts, 18-hole miniature golf course, and the fitness center.

But even with all this, there is one singular Split Rock amenity that consistently ranks as a guest favorite: the H2Oooohh! indoor water park. "It's one of the most marketable components of the resort, and definitely a popular attraction — even among people who aren't staying with us, as it's open to the general public," says



DiGiulio. “There are many travelers who visit Split Rock because of the water park, and then end up coming back every year.”

It’s an impressive structure, so it makes sense that families would plan their Poconos vacation with H2Oooohh! serving as a focal point. The entire facility spans 53,326 square feet (4,954 square meters) and is home to all of the obvious attributes. There’s a wave pool and a couple of play areas for young children, as well as hot tubs, a tiki bar, and a snack counter. But H2Oooohh! goes beyond the ordinary to ensure visitors can spend an entire day splashing about.

The Amazon Blast, Piranha, and Viper slides feature corkscrew curls and snaking switchbacks, and have an overall vertical drop of four stories.

And the Komodo Dragon was the very first FlowRider installed under a roof in the state of Pennsylvania. Speaking of which, keep in mind that the entire water park is indoors, so it’s operational year-round. Opening hours do vary, but families visiting in the dead of winter or height of shoulder season still have access — and timeshare guests can currently take advantage of a 15-percent discount on admission.

### A Mountain of Change

While H2Oooohh! receives the vast amount of consumer attention, DiGiulio and his team remain focused on what needs to be done elsewhere in order for Split Rock to achieve the aforementioned best-in-class family vacation status. “The improvements to date include upgraded rooms in the different buildings, refreshed indoor pool at the Galleria, updated common areas throughout the resort buildings, renovated restaurants with new menus and beverage selections, and an on-site convenience store that provides a selection of wines, deli items, and other food options.”

The Mountain Laurel property has undergone the most extensive makeover during the past year, with projects ranging from pop-the-champagne-worthy (the opening of a new restaurant) to things that will likely go unnoticed by guests (the roads leading to the resort have been repaved for a smoother approach). No matter where they fall on the renovation-excitement scale, however, one thing is for sure: Each of the upgrades “makes for more enjoyable and comfortable stays for

guests and timeshare owners,” DiGiulio says.

There’s no arguing that comfort and enjoyment are top priorities. “The building’s mechanical systems have been upgraded for improved heating and cooling,” DiGiulio explains. “The outdoor swimming pool and deck have been refurbished in order to be ready for hours of fun in the sun during the summer months. With the repaving, we also made sure to add clearly allocated parking spots and new signage, which lends itself to a refreshed overall feel.”

One of Mountain Laurel’s most unique activity offerings is horse-back riding. “That was something that was previously enjoyed by guests,” DiGiulio says. “So we revitalized the horse stables and reintroduced that equestrian amenity.”

The new Bella Gente Salon & Spa is sure to be enjoyed by guests, too. Treatment highlights include Swedish, deep tissue, and hot stone massages, as well as facials and complete nail and hair service. Mountain Laurel Resort also offers a great selection of on-site dining options, with the choices headlined by the newly opened farm-to-table Twelve21 restaurant.

“Whether guests are looking for a distinct and delicious dinner, an invigorating gallop through the forest, or a place to go unwind and be pampered, Mountain Laurel has them covered,” says DiGiulio.

### A Constant

And BREa seems to have Split Rock covered. “We believe the future here is bright,” DiGiulio says. “It’s a terrific resort that offers consumers an unparalleled value in the timeshare world. New ownership has made millions of dollars of improvements in the last 12 months, and there are more planned, including putting together a proposal to add an additional 192 units adjacent to Willowbrook.”

Obviously, DiGiulio isn’t afraid of change. When he sees something that needs to be shaken up so that Split Rock can move forward, he breaks out the sledgehammer.

Still, one crucial component of the development’s identity has remained status quo. “Since its original affiliation with Interval International, Split Rock has found it to be an extraordinary partner and a major factor in the success of the properties,” DiGiulio explains. “More importantly, the customer experience is critical. This legacy resort has more than 22,000 owners who have traveled all over the world, thanks to that Interval relationship. So

Interval is a very important piece, not only for the satisfaction of our owners, but in the sales process as well.”

That connection combined with all of Split Rock’s potential — a holiday-worthy water park, new restaurants, and myriad enhancements big and small — makes it easy to understand why DiGiulio is so quick to say, “We are very excited about the present and future of Split Rock.” [ ]

See page 2 for currency conversions.

## fastfacts

### Split Rock Resort

**Owner:** Stabilis Capital

**Headquarters:** New York City

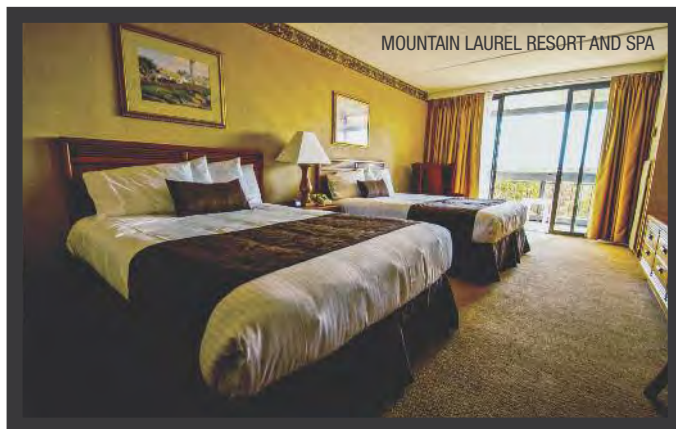
**Product:** 99-year right-to-use with floating weeks and units

**Resorts:** More than 500 units, predominantly one- and two-bedrooms, spread among The Galleria at Split Rock, Westwood at Split Rock, Willowbrook at Lake Harmony, and Mountain Laurel Resort and Spa.

**Price:** US\$5,000 to US\$25,000 based on unit size and season

**Website:** [splitrockresort.com](http://splitrockresort.com)

**Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, YouTube





By Marcos Ommati



THE BLISS JUNGLE, PLAYA DEL CARMEN



MAYAN PALACE MAZATLÁN

# Creating Extraordinary Vacations in Mexico

Mixing entertainment, modern and innovative constructions, concern for the environment, and the well-being of its employees, **Grupo Vidanta** continues to revolutionize the vacation industry in Mexico. The group seeks out partnerships with experts in their fields, from golfers Jack Nicklaus and Greg Norman to the visionaries at Cirque du Soleil. Through these affiliations, new concepts stretch the limits of what's considered possible from a travel company.

Case in point: Grupo Vidanta is taking its partnership with Cirque du Soleil to the next level with the debut of an immersive theme park, with the first phase slated for completion in 2018. This park will be a first-of-its-kind experience, fully animated by Cirque du Soleil artists, and will include a water park, a nature park, and an outdoor evening show.

"We have been dreaming together with Cirque du Soleil to create new categories of entertainment for Mexico and the world for more than five years," says Grupo Vidanta founder Daniel Chávez Morán. "The demand we've seen for JOYÀ, our existing Cirque du Soleil offering, makes us confident future projects will be met with success. When guests see what we are able to build in Nuevo Vallarta, they will know we are now in the position to build our dreams."

Of course, that doesn't mean Grupo Vidanta's resorts are being overlooked. The developer makes it a point to continually upgrade existing properties while also opening new locations for its resort hotels. Recent changes include the expansions of The Grand Bliss Riviera Maya and Grand Luxxe Residence Clubs in Riviera Maya and Nuevo Vallarta, as well as the opening of The Grand Mayan Puerto Peñasco on Mexico's Pacific Coast. With these changes, the company once again solidifies its position as one of the leaders in the vacation



GRAND LUXXE RESIDENCE CLUB, NUEVO VALLARTA

industry in Latin America. All these properties are part of the Interval International exchange network.

Iván Chávez, executive vice president of Grupo Vidanta, is understandably proud of the newest additions and changes to the company's portfolio. "We are constantly working to improve the vacation experience. From world-class entertainment to gourmet dining to exclusive shopping opportunities, we're committed to making sure that there's something at Vidanta for everyone. One of our current priorities is expanding the amazing courses of Vidanta Golf. We are looking forward to sharing these improvements with everyone."

According to Chávez, The Grand Mayan Puerto Peñasco, situated on the Sea of Cortez, offers one of the most remarkable golf experiences with The Jack Nicklaus Golf Course at Vidanta Puerto Peñasco. In addition, the new Greg Norman Golf Course at Vidanta Nuevo Vallarta is now open for play. In total, the Vidanta Golf offerings include six spectacular and distinctive courses, four designed by Nicklaus or Norman, plus The Jack Nicklaus Academy of Golf at Nuevo Vallarta.



Here, guests can perfect their games with a combination of state-of-the-art training technology and the best instructors in Mexico. It's no surprise that Vidanta Golf is recognized as a leading golf course operator in Mexico.

### A Fusion of Real Estate and Entertainment

New openings aside, Grupo Vidanta's creative and pioneering efforts to combine real estate and entertainment have attracted more attention to the company recently. Over the last few years, Grupo Vidanta has expanded its focus beyond resort hotels into all-in-one destinations filled with exciting and singular experiences.

"At Vidanta, we strongly value innovation," says Chávez. "From debuting new dining and activity concepts, to renovating resort grounds and developing new properties, to forging landmark partnerships with groundbreaking brands such as Cirque du Soleil, we're always pushing ourselves to keep evolving in order to create truly extraordinary vacations for our members and guests."

The much-talked-about deal with Cirque du Soleil sprouted in 2014, when Grupo Vidanta debuted JOYÀ. The unique show is housed at the Cirque du Soleil Theater on the Vidanta Riviera Maya property, a theater designed and built by the Vidanta architects. This theater received the 2015 Obra del Año award as the most important Mexican building project of the year and creates a perfect backdrop for the performance, as well as the three-course meal choreographed to complement it. JOYÀ is the first Cirque du Soleil show to include a dining experience as part of the performance.

### The Beginning

The story of Grupo Vidanta dates back to the 1970s, when a young and visionary Daniel Chávez Morán decided to apply his knowledge as a civil engineer to start a real estate consortium. As the founder of Grupo Vidanta, Chávez Morán was named one of the top 100 important businessmen in Mexico by CNN in 2014. He is also a member of the Citizen Security Advisory Council of the United Nations Development Program, and in 2015 received the Distinguished Leadership Award for Civic Engagement in the Americas from Inter-American Dialogue.

In 1974, Grupo Vidanta's first development opened its doors: Paraíso Mazatlán. Six years later saw the inauguration of the second resort: Paraíso del Mar in Mazatlán. From then on, Grupo Vidanta's progress never stopped. In 1991, the company opened Mayan Palace Acapulco, a five-star resort of more than 200 acres (81 hectares). According to industry experts, this concept redefined the Mexican vacation resort experience.

In addition, the company has built and sold more than 2,000 luxury vacation homes and developed Mar de Cortés International Airport in Puerto Peñasco, Mexico's first privately built and owned airport. A premier spa provider, Grupo Vidanta took its offerings to a new level with the recent addition of Spatium, a high-end, state-of-the-art spa with locations in Nuevo Vallarta and Riviera Maya.

### Friend of the Environment

Another core value of Grupo Vidanta is respect for the environment. Chávez explains that the company operates every facet of its business with the utmost integrity and respect



MAYAN PALACE ACAPULCO

for the planet, "taking great care to comply with and go beyond the strictest policies and best practices of sustainability."

Grupo Vidanta has been recognized with the EarthCheck Gold Certification every year since 2007 — an honor given by the international scientific benchmarking, certification, and advisory group for travel and tourism. The company uses efficient technologies, biodegradable and recyclable products, environmentally sound construction practices, and zero-carbon vehicles. For example, Vidanta Riviera Maya's water treatment facility has increased the amount of recycled/captured water to 47 percent throughout the resort, and 98 percent on The Jack Nicklaus Golf Course at the resort.

### A Great Place to Work

Today, Grupo Vidanta's properties attract some 700,000 visitors a year, with annual revenues of more than US\$750 million. The company, which is consistently recognized as one of the most sought-after employers in Latin America, employs more than 15,000 individuals.

Apparently, it's not only guests who go home happy from Grupo Vidanta's resorts. Thanks to its employees, the company has received the Great Place to Work (GPTW) recognition for the past five years. The company has also been listed among the top 10 Best Companies to Work For in Mexico since 2013. "The only way to ensure our members' happiness is to start with our employees' happiness," Chávez says.

Chávez reflects on the popularity of Grupo Vidanta properties: "Our strategy is to provide guests with the best possible vacation experience. We also believe in giving our guests ways to engage in those extraordinary vacation experiences, even when they're not on vacation. That's why we're proud to offer a brand-new website full of rich content — Vidanta.com — and a strong social media presence."

Whether exploring Vidanta.com or luxuriating in the countless ways to relax and rejuvenate at Grupo Vidanta resorts, members and guests are bound to find fulfillment, according to Interval International's Marcos Agostini, senior vice president of resort sales and business development for Latin America. "Grupo Vidanta is a first-class entity with a commitment to serving its customers an extraordinary experience. The company is deserving of its many awards and accolades." [1]

See page 2 for currency conversions.

Marcos Ommati has more than 20 years of international experience in journalism. He is editor-in-chief of the U.S. Southern Command's *Diálogo* magazine and website.

## fastfacts

### Grupo Vidanta

**Developer:** Grupo Vidanta

**Headquarters:** Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico

**Product:** Deeded weeks

**Resorts:** Nine affiliated with Interval International, in Nuevo Vallarta, Riviera Maya, Acapulco, Puerto Peñasco, Puerto Vallarta, and Mazatlán

**Website:** GrupoVidanta.com; Vidanta.com

**Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube

By Joshua Pramis



## Family Focus in Italy

Built along Italy's picture-perfect southern coast, Danaide Resort, a sprawling condo-hotel combination property, is the latest in the growing collection of Iniziative Turistiche Matarazzo vacation spots. Set to open in June 2016 — with the final phase planned for two years later — the developers hope to attract Italians looking for an easy summer escape to this seasonal resort.

**Location:** Matera, Province of Matera, Italy  
**Developer:** I.T.M. Iniziative Turistiche Matarazzo S.R.L.  
**Interval Affiliation:** 2015

**Setting:** Located on southern Italy's Ionian coast in Matera, Danaide Resort is adjacent to a dense pine forest, which separates it from the beach along the Ionian Sea. Just 6 miles (10 kilometers) to the south is Policoro, a small town where the Museo Archeologico Nazionale della Siritide houses artifacts excavated from the surrounding land.

**Back Story:** The development company comprises an Italian family construction company based in southern Italy. The relationship with Interval International began in 1994, when Interval affiliated the company's first resort, also in Matera, and then added a second property four years later. Rocco Matarazzo, resort developer, has been the group managing director since 1994. A total of 146 apartments, along with the hotel portion of the property, are set for phase one, with an additional 92 timeshare units to be completed by June 2018.

**At the Resort:** The property is separated from the sea by 1,640 feet (500 meters) of pine forest on a semi-isolated plot of land. On-property amenities include boutique shopping, restaurant, bar, theater, and spa.

**Accommodations:** The 238 one- and two-bedroom units will be distributed among 36 three-story buildings across the property. Each of the residences comes equipped with a full separate kitchen, as well as a private balcony, many of which overlook a central courtyard and pool.

**Activities:** Outdoor pastimes are the main attraction here. On property are three tennis courts, a basketball court, a soccer field, and a playground. The nearby private beach is host to sun-beds, umbrellas, paddle boarding, and windsurfing.

### Units and Sizes:

- 66 one-bedroom, one-bath units with balcony, 125 square feet (38 square meters)
- 124 one-bedroom, two-bath units with balcony, 148 square feet (45 square meters)
- 8 one-bedroom, one-bath units with balcony, 148 square feet (45 square meters)
- 40 two-bedroom, two-bath units with balcony, 207 square feet (63 square meters)

**In the Area:** The Basilicata region is a dream-come-true for any history or archeology fan. The area is speckled with well-preserved ancient ruins, such as the Temple of Hera in Metaponto and the Castle of Melfi.

**The Product:** Deeded right-to-use

**Target Market:** Italian consumers, particularly families with children

**Marketing Strategies:** During open seasons, an experienced team of direct sales agents will work on-site, and use advertising in both local newspapers and TV stations to reach target consumers.

**Price:** €2,700 to €23,450 (US\$2,874 to US\$24,965) per week

**And We Quote:** "We look forward to receiving Interval members who will be trading in and allow our timeshare owners to have access to the great opportunities offered by the Interval network."  
 — Giovanni Matarazzo, resort director

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By Joyce Hadley Copeland

# New Lifestyle Choice for Egyptian Families



PORTO SOUTH BEACH VACATION CLUB,  
AIN SOKHNA

Egypt may be best known for its pyramids and vast desert, but it's hardly at a loss for idyllic seaside vacation destinations.

Just an hour outside of Cairo, Ain Sokhna is a breezy weekend reprieve from the heat and chaos of the city on the western shore of the Gulf of Suez. Sharm el Sheikh attracts an international crowd to its world-class dive sites and lively nightlife on the Red Sea Riviera. El Alamein — a port on the Mediterranean Sea two hours west of Alexandria — is transforming the country's North Coast into an equally enviable vacation destination. Front and center in each location: a Porto resort.

## Creating Porto World

A decade ago, Amer Group, a respected Egyptian developer of residential properties, resorts, shopping malls, and restaurants since 1985, wowed the market with its Porto World concept — mammoth mixed-used resorts, each designed to be a destination in its own right, with so much to do on-site that few residents or guests got around to leaving the premises.

"The Porto brand is very unique and very popular in Egypt," says Nancy Sarwat, CEO of Porto World Hotels and Resorts. Resorts in the blossoming Porto portfolio include a world-class marina, an Olympic training site, a Venice-style lagoon with gondolas, even a mountain-top location. Studded with fancy shopping promenades, Vegas-style dancing fountains, and cosmopolitan concert venues, the



PORTO MARINA, EL ALAMEIN

sprawling villages include dozens of swimming pools and restaurants, luxury spas, and championship golf courses.

## A Family-Friendly Lifestyle

In the family-friendly Egyptian market, vacation ownership fits like a glove. The market trendsetter, Amer Group introduced the concept of fractional ownership to the country.

"We are a very family-oriented destination and we understand what Egyptians want. We are selling a lifestyle," says Sherif Khalil, chief commercial officer of Amer Group. "There is something new you can do every day of your stay. And we know that kids are the most important part of any family on vacation. That's why we're very focused on entertaining kids." The company's own mascot, Papa Porto, roams the grounds of each resort, engaging children with adventure stories, carnival games, and gifts.

Today, 20,000 members enjoy maximum flexibility, using the 30 nights in their fractional shares to reserve weekend or weeklong stays in contemporary one- and two-bedroom apartments in Porto Vacation Club's four resorts. A fifth option is set to open in the tony Nabq area of Sharm el Sheikh in 2016, followed by beach resorts on Jordan's Dead Sea and in Agadir, Morocco.



The club's swift growth is due in large part to its decision not to scale back, even in the face of challenging political, financial, and social times. As Egypt continues to address incidents targeting tourist areas with stricter security measures, Khalil affirms, "People will not stop taking vacations. We've had some challenges. We've trusted that, in bad times, we could do better than anybody else — and it's turned into a reality. We've used this as an opportunity, instead of going conservative like anybody else."

### Upping the Ante Every Time

With its first two landmark resorts on the Mediterranean Sea, Porto Vacation Club demonstrates a style that is anything but conservative.

POV at Porto Marina and Porto Marina Beach Club has a state-of-the-art, 1,200-berth marina that can accommodate crafts up to 328 feet (100 meters), and stages plays and concerts at its Piazza de Espana, a venue reminiscent of Rome's Spanish Steps. The property's broad, palm-fringed promenade is dotted with 180 designer shops and 11 restaurants and al-fresco cafes, adding to its European cachet. Five minutes away, a sister resort called POV at Porto Golf and Golf Porto Marina Beach Club rolled out the region's first 18-hole championship golf course. Sprawling across 370 acres (150 hectares), the resort includes an international spa, a 200-shop mega-mall, 12 restaurants, and a water park with a dancing fountain. The resort is also the high-profile home to Olympic City, a training facility for sports professionals and soccer teams from Europe and the Middle East. Both resorts have 200 timeshare apartments.

In 2011, POV at Porto Sokhna followed suit with another 200 apartments in Ain Sokhna on the Gulf of Suez. The popular weekend destination welcomes guests with 18 holes of championship golf, eight swimming pools, a spa, and three malls. Crowning the property is an 886-foot (270 meters) mountain. One of the dozen on-site restaurants — accessible only by cable car — serves up breathtaking views of the Red Sea from its summit.

With its fourth resort, Porto South Beach Vacation Club in Ain Sokhna, Porto Vacation Club quadrupled the number of timeshare apartments, opening 835 units on an expansive private beach. In addition to luxury amenities that are standard at other Porto Vacation Club resorts, Porto South Beach offers a mind-boggling array of activities, including kite boarding, zip-lining, a climbing wall, football, tennis, squash, horseback riding, and go-carting. There is even a paintball compound on-site.

When Porto Sharm Resort adds 340 timeshare apartments in Sharm el Sheikh in 2016, Porto Vacation Club will again up the ante. Built around manmade Grand Lake, the 160-acre (65 hectares) complex will include a golf course, which occupies one of four islands in the lake, an open-air theater, and an international theme park. One of two premier shopping streets on-site, The Corniche is a promenade with views of Grand Lake's fountains, built as a replica of the shopping area of the same name in Alexandria. A 17-acre (7 hectares) private beach is five minutes away by shuttle.

### Experiencing is Believing

With sales offices in the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Jordan, Porto Vacation Club reaches out to its primary target market in Egypt and Egyptian residents living abroad through traditional channels



POV AT PORTO SOKHNA



PORTO GOLF, EL ALAMEIN

such as direct mail and print advertising, as well as ongoing fly-and-buy programs and social media. In fact, the fly-and-buy program consistently yields a 30- to 40-percent conversion rate, Khalil reports, emphasizing that it's often a small step from a positive firsthand experience to a referral.

"We have a good number of our clients who are really happy and enjoy their stay and they start referring their friends and other family members to join them during their vacation," Kahlil says. "Someone referred from any already existing client is a hot lead."

The company also has high hopes for social media. "Social media is a very strong tool in our marketing," Sarwat says. The company just signed on with a new agency that will create compelling video content and ads for YouTube and Facebook, and will conduct online campaigns that the company hopes will go viral.

### A Pivotal Partner

Having Interval International as a vacation exchange partner is a strategic part of Porto Vacation Club's plans for growth.

"Interval has lots of integrity in the market," Khalil says. "Interval focuses on the quality of the resorts. It's not about numbers, it's all about quality of affiliations, which helps during the sales process. We know their exchange system is very transparent. So, all those factors give Interval an edge over any other exchange company."

Numbers equal to many established international vacation clubs also give Porto Vacation Club an edge when it comes to future growth in Egypt and abroad. "It's not only about expanding in the Middle East," Kahlil says. "Soon, we will be launching our new project in Morocco, another beachfront destination, and we have plans to expand internationally in other European countries." [E]

See page 2 for currency conversions.

## fastfacts

### Porto Vacation Club

**Developer:** Amer Group; Mansour Amer, chairman; Omar Amer, vice chairman and chief business development officer

**Headquarters:** Cairo, Egypt

**Product:** Fractional, 30 nights, right-to-use for 30 or 50 years

**Price:** From US\$5,700 to US\$23,000

**Resorts:** Sokhna: Porto South Beach Vacation Club and Porto Sokhna; Sharm el Sheikh: Porto Sharm Resort (under construction); El Alamein: Porto Marina and Golf Porto Marina

**Website:** amer-group.com

**Social Media:** Facebook, Twitter, Instagram

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The Interval International Visa Signature® card with WorldPoints® rewards builds brand affinity with your owners' vacation purchase decision. Present this valuable card to prospective owners as an alternate form of payment for their unit purchase or an affordable trial ownership program. The online application process is quick and convenient, and the card is yet another perk of Interval membership.



## The Interval International Visa Signature® Card With WorldPoints® Rewards Is a Tool for Our Times

When you tell your prospective owners about the Interval International Visa Signature card with WorldPoints rewards, you will be offering them a card with:

- **No annual fee**
- **5,000 bonus points** if they make at least \$500 in purchases in the first 90 days\*
- **1 point** for each net retail purchase dollar spent, including the vacation ownership down payment
- **Points** that can be redeemed for:
  - Interval International membership renewals and upgrades
  - Cash
  - Hotel, car rental, and air travel rewards
  - Cruise discounts and onboard credits
  - Gift cards from top retailers
  - Resort Accommodations Certificates

This information is for educational purposes to be used by resort affiliates of Interval International and is not intended to be provided directly to potential applicants for a credit card. Please refer customers who wish to have more information or to apply for a credit card to Interval International. Offer is valid for U.S. citizens and residents.

\*Bonus Points Offer. You will qualify for 5,000 bonus points if you use your new credit card account to make any combination of Purchase transactions totaling at least \$500 (exclusive of any fees, returns and adjustments) that post to your account within 90 days of the account open date.

Limit one (1) bonus points offer per new account. This one-time promotion is limited to new customers opening an account in response to this offer.

Other advertised promotional bonus points offers can vary from this promotion and may not be substituted. Allow 8-12 weeks from qualifying for the bonus points to post to your rewards balance. The value of this reward may constitute taxable income to you. You may be issued an Internal Revenue Service Form 1099 (or other appropriate form) that reflects the value of such reward. Please consult your tax advisor, as neither we, nor our affiliates, provide tax advice.

This credit card program is issued and administered by Bank of America, N.A. Visa and Visa Signature are registered trademarks of Visa International Service Association, and are used by the issuer pursuant to license from Visa U.S.A., Inc. WorldPoints, Bank of America and Bank of America logo are registered trademarks of Bank of America Corporation. ©2015 Bank of America Corporation.

To learn more about promoting this credit card to your prospective owners, contact Interval International at +866.554.8168, email [WorldPoints@intervalintl.com](mailto:WorldPoints@intervalintl.com), or visit [ResortDeveloper.com](http://ResortDeveloper.com).







## Meridian Financial Services = Collections at No Cost to You

Meridian is a veteran of the shared ownership industry. We understand the impact of bad debt, as well as the importance of keeping your owners' accounts current, and preserving their confidence in the purchase decision.

**Meridian Financial Services, an Interval Affiliate Advantage, is a sophisticated third-party collection agency able to service whole and partial portfolios.**

### Services include:

- Full-service collection agency for domestic and international clients
- No-cost-to-client recovery program
- Customized industry collection strategies
- Credit reporting
- Skiptracing
- Online services
- Credit and collection consulting



**Take Advantage of Preferential Pricing and Value-Added Benefits**

To learn, at no cost, how Meridian can work for you, please contact:  
Greg Sheperd, president,  
+866.294.7120, ext. 6705; [GSheperd@merid.com](mailto:GSheperd@merid.com)  
Zaida Smith, vice president, international sales,  
+866.294.7120, ext. 6747; [ZSmith@merid.com](mailto:ZSmith@merid.com)

# Discount Shopping Dollars

POWERED BY

**entertainment.**



## Enhance Sales and Marketing Programs

Through its long-standing relationship with Entertainment®, Interval International® offers preferred rates on Discount Shopping Dollars as a marketing tool.

This Interval Affiliate Advantage provides a high-value sales proposition at attractive prices. The premium can be used as a **purchase incentive**, **customer reward**, or for any **other sales or marketing purpose**.

### Discount Shopping Dollars features:

- Online offers that save buyers up to 90 percent on brand-name merchandise, dining, and entertainment
- More than 200,000 bargains
- Denominations from \$25 to \$500
- Customizable based on quantity purchased
- Flexible delivery methods
- The trusted brand of Entertainment®, a recognized market leader in the discounts and promotions sector
- Discount Dining Dollars also available



To learn more, contact Entertainment Promotions™ at +855.554.3231 or email [Interval@entertainment.com](mailto:Interval@entertainment.com).





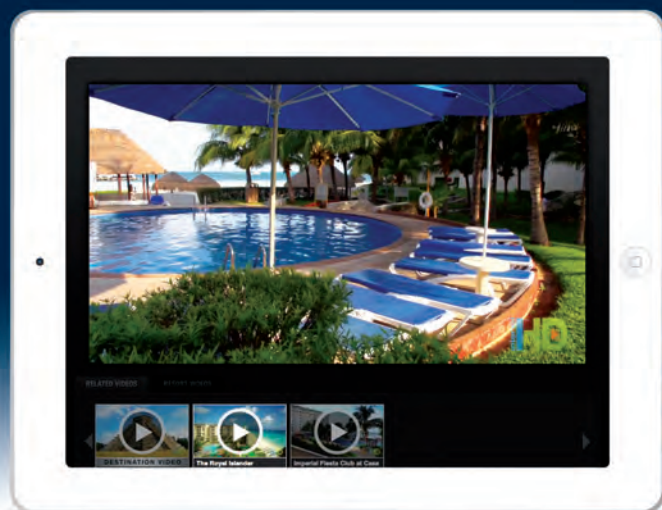
## Keeping Resorts Competitive in the Digital Age

**DG Film Company, a full-service production company with more than 15 years of experience — including the creation of customized resort presentations worldwide — has joined the Interval Affiliate Advantages program.**

- DG Film Company offers professional film presentations that meet clients' marketing needs while remaining within budget
- Resorts are showcased in a captivating style, incorporating creative video elements that appeal to clients' target audiences
- Website videos boost Internet search results and increase the rate of viewer response

**For a two- to three-minute showcase video, participating resorts will receive preferential pricing on the following:**

- Script development, including music and narration
- On-location filming of interiors, exteriors, amenities, or other aspects of the resort or destination
- Interviews with resort representatives and owners
- Aerial and underwater shots
- Video optimization for the Internet and master DVD for in-house application



**intervalHD**

Resort video footage can be included on Interval HD at [IntervalWorld.com](http://IntervalWorld.com).

Sample videos can be found at [dgfilmco.com](http://dgfilmco.com). See how DG Film Company can help achieve crucial marketing goals for your resort property. Contact the company at 435.674.1133 or by email at [Production@dgfilmco.com](mailto:Production@dgfilmco.com).







# Trust

## a Proven Leader

Fidelity National Timeshare provides a variety of transaction-focused services exclusively to the shared ownership industry. Led by industry veterans, this powerhouse offers decades of experience and a wealth of real-world knowledge.

**As an Affiliate Advantages partner, Fidelity National Timeshare offers resorts affiliated with Interval International preferential pricing\* on:**

- Agent and escrow services
- Document management
- Default solutions
- Inventory control
- Title insurance
- Trustee assistance
- Merchant account processing
- Accommodation recordings

\*Excluding pricing that is set by local, state, or federal governments.

**To learn more, contact Kerri Luther, national director of business development, at [Timeshare@fnf.com](mailto:Timeshare@fnf.com).**



# HARBOR LINEN

A BED BATH & BEYOND COMPANY



With more than 40 years as a manufacturer and distributor of institutional textiles made specifically for the hospitality industry, Harbor Linen has put together the most extensive line of bed and bath linens available today.

With the power of Bed Bath & Beyond behind us, we are able to provide our customers around the globe with a quality product, shipped in a timely manner, at a very competitive price.

We want to help grow your business. Here's what we offer:

- Seasoned team of hospitality experts
- Nationwide and international sales force
- Preferential pricing with volume discounts available to Interval International-affiliated resorts
- Free freight (in the continental U.S.)
- Bonded warehouse in Miami for Caribbean shipments
- Distribution centers in:
  - New Jersey • Georgia
  - Missouri • California
  - Florida • Nevada
  - Panama • Mexico



To learn more, contact:  
Chris Rogers, vice president,  
800.257.7858, ext. 4459; [CRogers@harborlinen.com](mailto:CRogers@harborlinen.com)  
Tammy Zarrilli, sales executive,  
800.257.7858, ext. 4413; [Tzarrilli@harborlinen.com](mailto:Tzarrilli@harborlinen.com)



# ■ Advertise with **impact**

Readers of **Vacation Industry Review** are active members of the vacation ownership and hospitality sectors. They use the magazine as a tool to keep up with what's happening and to find out about new products and services. A **Vacation Industry Review** reader survey found:

**More than 80 percent** say that the editorial content of **Vacation Industry Review** is useful or valuable to them.

**In excess of three-fourths** indicate that the advertised products and services in **Vacation Industry Review** are useful or valuable.

**TO PLACE AN AD IN  
VACATION INDUSTRY REVIEW:**

**Get the results you need — call today.**

Contact Nicole Meck  
Phone: +949.470.8324  
Email: [Nicole.Meck@intervalintl.com](mailto:Nicole.Meck@intervalintl.com)







**Georgios Mortakis** has been promoted to vice president and chief information security officer for Interval Leisure Group (ILG). He joined the company two years ago, and has since developed and implemented a comprehensive information security program. He has more than 20 years of IT experience and 15-plus years of experience specific to cyber-security and risk management.

## Interval Takes Home Adrian Award



The Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International (HSMIA) awarded Interval International with a Silver Adrian Award for its print advertisement for the Interval Sales Tool Kit. More than 1,300 entries were judged by a panel of senior industry and media experts. This recognition marks the 11th HSMIA award presented to Interval to date.

“The high-impact ad is certainly award-worthy,” notes Interval’s Jan Wyatt, vice president of corporate marketing. “But more importantly, the Interval Sales Tool Kit has been very effective in attracting attention, generating interest, and helping our developer clients in their sales programs.”



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# TRUST.

Your owners trust you to make their dreams a reality. Trust us to help you simplify the way you do that.

**Trust a proven leader.**

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Default Services | Inventory Control



*We've got you covered.*

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# NEED SUPPORT? **WE'RE ALL IN.**

**INTERVAL INTERNATIONAL®** offers a unique suite of tools to support you and your team. These signature programs motivate, educate, and reward your staff.



## MOTIVATE

Honor top sales producers with prizes and recognition.



## EDUCATE

Help your resort staff manage inventory and better serve owners.



## REWARD

Give associates the opportunity to experience vacation ownership firsthand.

For more information on these programs, contact Sonia Landin, 305.925.7340 or [Sonia.Landin@intervalintl.com](mailto:Sonia.Landin@intervalintl.com), or visit [ResortDeveloper.com](http://ResortDeveloper.com).



[RESORTDEVELOPER.COM](http://RESORTDEVELOPER.COM)



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TODAY!**

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For more information about joining ARDA,  
please contact (202) 371-6700 or [membership@arda.org](mailto:membership@arda.org).



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Partial list of Global Timeshare Developers in attendance, 2010–2015 ARDA World Convention