



BEVERLY WILSHIRE

Beverly Hills

A FOUR SEASONS HOTEL



Peter Humig

**Regional Vice President
General Manager Beverly Wilshire Hotel**

By Suzanne Takowsky-Ferre

Definitely not a typical city translates into the Beverly Hills way of life needing special people to make our world spin. That couldn't be more true than when it comes to the most famous intersection in the world: Rodeo Drive and Wilshire Boulevard—home to the world renowned Beverly Wilshire Hotel. I am not sure what I expected meeting the new General Manager of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel—maybe a little stiff, not too talkative... whatever I expected got tossed out the window when Peter Humig walked in. We sat down to talk about what else: Him and his famous hotel. The son of a renowned Swiss hotelier, Peter enjoyed an upbringing amid all the fanfare of a 5-Star ski resort in Switzerland and says, "The business kind of fell in my lap. I never had a dream of becoming a pilot, never wanted to become a firefighter. I wanted to become a General Manager, and I wanted to become the General Manager of the best hotel in the world. I realized at some point such a thing does not exist. However, there is the best company in the world to work for in luxury hospitality... The Four Seasons." Some 20+ years ago, Humig joined the Four Season and launched into traveling the world. Once he started the climb up the corporate ladder he never looked back although he did look around—for a city to plant roots and call home for him, his wife and their children. As fate would have it the Four Seasons brought him to Beverly Hills, and to one of the most luxurious hotels in the world. Wish granted.

SF: Has your family adjusted to life in the wild wild west?

PH: I met my wife in 1992 and I proposed to her in 1998. We worked in San Diego for five years and my twins were born in La Jolla. I traveled to and from Beverly Hills on sales calls, and became very knowledgeable with the hotel, so I knew what I was getting into. In

fact, we pushed hard to come here. For eight years after we left California my wife was begging me, "When do we return?" Then, when the opportunity was presented, we were on a plane the next day. There was no question.

SF: What do you think of Beverly Hills?

PH: Beverly Hills is like 5th Avenue in New York, like Mayfair in London... everyone knows it, everyone wants to be a part of it. It's a fascinating part of the world. I first came to Beverly Hills when I was 21-years-old. I'm close to 50; there's been a long time in-between. It's the same city, but with different people doing great things. I've met many amazing people since I started. Like you said, some have been here for a very, very long time and it takes a while to get to know everyone—people take their time getting acquainted. I love the energy too. People here are always working toward something, and being a part of the excitement is very rewarding.

SF: What is the day-to-day of your position?

PH: It's still pretty new, and I'm also a Regional Vice

President, so I have four other hotels I travel between. One is in Los Cabos, Mexico it's a new development we are opening later this year; another is in Santa Fe, New Mexico; a ski resort in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and another is in Whistler, British Columbia. It's a process.

SF: Anything new for the Beverly Wilshire?

PH: The hotel is 90 years young. We are one of the few iconic hotels in the world that has such rich history, so when it comes to remodeling we have to be very careful that we don't turn it into something modern and lose what has been acquired in its history over the last 90 years. Currently, we are assessing the needs of the hotel.

ST: Does that mean you're thinking about changes?

PH: We are past thinking. We are focused on guest rooms at this point. We are also considering changes to the spa. Our goal in making changes is to take what we have now... what our guests from around the world depend on, and love about the hotel, and then build on it. We are having very meaningful conversations about

how to make the hotel the most appealing to our customers. We want it to be contemporary, but we also want to keep everything in line with the feel of the hotel. We completed the renovations of our ballrooms. They look terrific and match what the atmosphere of the hotel is known for. The feel remains historic, but the newer accommodations fit the needs of today's meetings so our guests have all the technology they want. The designers have done a tremendous job.

ST: No way I can end this without asking... What do you have to say about, "Pretty Woman"?

PH: That is a bit of a double-edged sword. If you go to China or Russia, they adore, "Pretty Woman" as if it aired yesterday. In the U.S. it aired 25 years ago. So, we are proud of it certainly, but we are also trying to move forward. We are trying to embrace the next generation of guests. ■

