

PRESS RELEASE

EHMA ELECTS DOMINIQUE GODAT “HOTEL MANAGER OF THE YEAR 2020”

The Swiss professional is at the head of the historic Hotel Metropol in Moscow



Dominique Nicolas Godat, General Manager Hotel Metropol Moscow, is this year’s winner of the prestigious award “European Hotel Manager”, that EHMA – European Hotel Managers Association – annually confers to a member who has achieved results of excellence in hotel management during the preceding year and all over his/her career. EHMA is a non-profit association of Hotel Managers operating first class and luxury hotels across Europe, founded in Rome in 1974 with the aim of improving professionalism in hospitality and enhancing customer service. Currently the Association has over 400 members representing 29 European countries. The prize was awarded to Dominique Nicolas Godat for his great international experience in managing very complex properties in a number of competitive and difficult markets. The runners-up were Giacomo Guzzardi, General Manager Le Méridien Visconti Rome and Palazzo Scanderbeg, and Pawel Lewtak, General Manager Polonia Palace Hotel Warsaw.

Dominique Nicolas Godat

Swiss national, born in Berne in 1958, after graduating from the École Hôtelière de Lausanne and a brief experience in Switzerland, Dominique Nicolas Godat undertook at once an **international career**, alternating jobs at the Dubai International Hotel, the Plaza Athénée and the Pierre in New York with homecomings at the Beau-Rivage Palace in Lausanne and Le Mirador in Vevey, where he held **increasingly important positions** culminating in the appointment to **General Manager of the Kulm Hotel St. Moritz**, which he managed from 2002 to 2013.

Finally, **in 2013, he was called to direct the Metropol Moscow**, a historic luxury hotel, located in front of the famous Bolshoi Theater, with 390 rooms and suites, 12 meeting/banquet rooms, restaurants, Bar and Spa facility. The mandate included **the hotel operation and simultaneously the planning/supervision of the imposing restoration works, the repositioning on the market and the introduction of new quality standards**. Godat is also responsible for the Petroff Palace Boutique Hotel (one of the residences of Empress Catherine II the Great) and for the planning of Roza Rossa, a residential complex that includes 95 hotel rooms and 120 apartments.

"It is **every hotelier's dream** to manage a hotel with a great history, where **architecture, location gastronomy and personalized service** are all on such a grand scale," comments **Dominique Godat**, "Waking up an iconic hotel like Metropol Moscow from its Winter sleep and bringing it back up to its tradition in the Russian capital is an incredible opportunity and extraordinary experience".

Since 1905, the year of its inauguration, **the Metropol** has been the favourite meeting point of the crème de la crème of Russian society, which enjoyed the “dolce vita” beneath its monumental glass dome. In later times, however, the hotel remained the place where the heads of state of the communist world gathered. Dark times followed for the hotel, until it was bought by a Russian oligarch who had only one imperative: **to restore it to its maximum splendor with a Swiss management** that would bring together an efficient team and develop an appropriate strategy. “It was not easy - admits Godat – from 2014 to 2016 one crisis was followed by the next one and we had to fight and work hard for our economic survival. But in the end **the success was possible thanks to the dedication and excellent work of my all-Russian team who deserves my great appreciation**: together we made this wonderful union between the Russian soul and the Asian and European cultures ". This hotel is so fascinating that it is **the setting for a historical novel**, "A Gentleman in Moscow", written in 2016 by Amor Towles, in which the protagonist is a Russian aristocrat condemned in 1922 precisely for his social class to spend the rest of his life at the Hotel Metropol.

Giacomo Guzzardi

Born into a family of hoteliers for three generations, Giacomo Guzzardi distinguished himself for the **affiliation** in 2016 – after a thorough market analysis and a complete renovation – of the **Visconti Palace Hotel in Rome (4 stars superior) to the Le Méridien brand** of the Marriott group (then Starwood), which was no longer represented in Italy, becoming Le Méridien Visconti Rome. **Palazzo Scanderbeg**, on the other hand, is a luxury residence in the heart of the capital, completely renovated in 2015 and opened in February 2016, which offers a high standard of personalized services and 24-hour guest service. Since August 2019 Palazzo Scanderbeg is affiliated to the prestigious brand of Homes & Villas by Marriott.

Pawel Lewtak

In addition to managing the **Polonia Palace Hotel**, Pawel Lewtak is the Chief Marketing and Operations Officer of the **Syrena Group**, which owns and manages three hotels in Warsaw: the Polonia Palace itself (206 rooms), the Metropol (211 rooms) and the MDM (134 rooms). With more than **17 years of diversified experience** within international and Polish chains as well as unique independent hotels, Pawel Lewtak has a **progressive record of achievements** including the successful opening and positioning of hotels, developing business through effective sales and marketing strategies, supervising major renovation and expansion projects, setting and maintaining the highest quality standards through a constant staff training process.

EHMA in brief

The EHMA - European Hotel Managers Association was **founded in Rome in 1974** by a number of hotel top executives of undisputed professional ethics aiming at maintaining and increasing the hotel industry image. It is made up of high-level hotel managers who constantly strive to improve their professionalism and that of their staff, in order **to maintain, enhance and innovate services offered to their customers**. Currently the Association has over **400 members representing 29 European countries**, of which about 300 are General Managers of luxury hotels. In numbers, they represent approx. **300 hotels, 85,000 rooms and 65,000 employees**.

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