FRANK MARRENBACH
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, OETKER COLLECTION

Frank Marrenbach, Chief Executive Officer, Oetker Collection, tells Can Faik of his pride in watching the brand grow and prosper as it welcomes guests from all over the world...

Oetker Collection is an inspiring selection of masterpiece hotels. Distinguished by the finest traditions of European hospitality, each property is iconic and one-of-a-kind, offering unique and memorable experiences to affluent and astute travellers.

What was your background in hospitality prior to working for Oetker Collection?
I was born in the Rhineland and embarked on commercial training at the Steigenberger Parkhotel in Düsseldorf after passing my A-levels. Then, my career took me to The Berkeley in London, the Hôtel de Crillon in Paris and the Steigenberger Fontürfurter Hof before I arrived at the Federal Government Guesthouse at the Petersberg near Königswinter, where I took over as Resident Manager in 1994. In 1997, I moved in the same capacity to Brenners Park-Hotel & Spa in Baden Baden. In October 2000, I took over the position of Managing Director at Brenners Park-Hotel & Spa and, in 2008, Rudolf August Oetker offered me the role of CEO of the Oetker Hotel Management Company based in Baden Baden.

Where are you based?
I’m based in Baden Baden, Germany, at the Brenners Park-Hotel, enjoying every minute of it!

What does your current position involve?
Managing the company with a wonderful, dedicated and professional team of experts.

What do you enjoy most about your role?
Meeting different people from different backgrounds. Creating these meaningful connections enhances my knowledge, and it is so important in my role to listen to people, my dear hoteliers, loyal partners of the brand. It feeds my mind and brings new ideas and concepts we may want to develop one day. And, well, the greatest ideas always come from different brains.

What are the complexities of meeting the demands of shareholders, fulfilling the growth of your management team and delivering the brand’s values to the guests?
Every day is a challenge. We need to cover all fronts, being fair and sharp to accomplish all of these missions. The complexity might be the time; time is precious, and sometimes you just do not have enough time in one day to achieve what you have to do. At the same time, it is what is exciting about this role, always looking forward – and most important – doing things with passion.

What are the most challenging issues you are facing within your current role?
Offering the best experience within our Masterpiece Hotels to be the ‘Hosts of Choice’. To do so, as a hotelier, you need to be curious, read, discover, taste, new things and products, benchmark stories, taste street flavours, experiment in the

Chef’s Restaurant at The Lanesborough, London
What are the personality traits that define a successful and happy hotel proprietor, in your opinion?
Smiles, character and commitment. Reliable, enthusiastic and loyal. Humble, creative and passionate. Passion will guide you everywhere.

Have you noticed any particular trends in hotels in Europe compared to US and Asia?
Unforgettable destinations. Guests are looking for uniqueness and authenticity, creating memories in their hearts.

The world is guiding us towards a new way of travelling, always experiencing something else and looking for sincerity and rarity. It could be a true rendez-vous in silence in an outstanding location. Someone who would like to reconnect with family and friends, who forgets about time, work, and who wants to admire the beauty of the nature.

With our new Masterpiece Estates offering, we aim to offer a unique way of travelling.

What role does technology play in improving the guest experience?
Indeed, technology is booming but guests are really seeking a more authentic experience. Caring about their families and friends, travellers want to reconnect with themselves and their loved ones. Attention to detail will be something to constantly focus on, avoiding too much technology. Personalise a stay, create magic for your guests.
Have you noticed any particular trends in hotel interior design?
Light, freshness and a contemporary little ‘twist’.
Feeling like a home away from home. The connection with incredible nature and the impeccable setting of a place. Corporate Social Responsibility has also been largely introduced into our hotels especially when it comes to design. We constantly make sure we develop, care, and protect the nature surrounding our hotels while implementing new décor and concepts within them.

How important do you feel general design has become when launching a new hotel?
Major. The design is a top priority for us. We make sure to have the right people overseeing the design projects and we have a dedicated team to ensure it reflects our DNA and high-quality standards while preserving the soul of our hotels.

What advice would you offer aspiring hoteliers?
Always believe in yourself. The key to success is to start before you are even ready, and remember you are the greatest project you will ever get to work on and do what makes you truly happy.

What would you say are the three best places you have ever stayed?
JK Place, Capri
The Norman, Tel Aviv
Singita Sasakwa Lodge, Tanzania

Where currently ranks highest on your travel wishlist?
Cambodia, the Himalayas and discovering Alaska, this extraordinary wild part of the world.

What keeps you motivated?
Not knowing what tomorrow will be!

Let’s finish with the issue of work-life balance. How do you aim to achieve a good balance and what do those closest to you think of your attempts?
You always find the right balance and your loved ones are very understanding. Moreover, my work is not a job, but a true passion so there is no real balance to find, it is just the perfect equilibria already.