



Montage's Mission

An Interview with Alan Fuerstman,
 Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer,
 Montage International



Montage Beverly Hills (left); Montage Deer Valley (above);
 Montage Los Cabos (below)

EDITORS' NOTE Alan J. Fuerstman is Founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Montage International. Prior to launching Montage Hotels & Resorts 16 years ago, Fuerstman was the opening Vice President of Hotel Operations at Bellagio in Las Vegas. Previously, he served as President and Managing Director of The Phoenician. He began his distinguished career with Marriott International. Fuerstman graduated with a B.A. degree from Gettysburg College.



Alan Fuerstman

COMPANY BRIEF Montage International (montage.com) is a hotel and resort management company designed to serve the luxury traveler and homeowner. The company encompasses an artistic collection of distinctive hotels, resorts, and residences in stunning settings that offer comfortable elegance, a unique sense and spirit of place, impeccable hospitality, and memorable culinary, spa, and lifestyle experiences. The Montage Hotels & Resorts portfolio of hotels, resorts, and residences includes Montage Laguna Beach, Montage Beverly Hills, Montage Deer Valley, Montage Kapalua Bay, Montage Palmetto Bluff and the recently opened Montage Los Cabos. In 2014, the company launched Pendry Hotels, a collection of new luxury hotels in taste-making destinations, including Pendry San Diego and Sagamore Pendry Baltimore. Pendry Hotels brings together the best in vibrant design and anticipatory service. In addition, the company also operates some of the country's premiere golf courses and clubs, including Spanish Peaks Mountain Club in Big Sky, Montana, and The May River Golf Club in Bluffton, South Carolina.

Has the mission for Montage Hotels & Resorts remained consistent since its inception?

The mission for Montage Hotels & Resorts has remained consistent. When we started Montage, I had the belief that ultra-luxury or old-world luxury was too pretentious and scripted and that the next generation of luxury traveler was looking for a much more humble and gracious approach. We felt that travelers wanted a property to be more reflective of the locale. We set out to fulfill that vision, both through the style of service and the unique sense and spirit of place of our hotels.

When we launched in Laguna Beach, our style of service was exceptionally well received by the younger generation of affluent travelers, but additionally, we were pleasantly surprised at how

well our service culture resonated with the older generation of travelers.

While each of your properties clearly has an individual focus and position within its community, are there certain consistent characteristics a guest will find in every Montage?

Guests will find there is a very local aesthetic from a design and architectural perspective. At all Montage's, there is a great emphasis on culinary and spa experiences, dynamic programming, and the style of service will be our gracious and humble approach to ultra-luxury.

What is the key to being successful in the culinary part of the business?

Food and beverage has always been a cornerstone of Montage. Rather than place the same concept in every hotel or resort, we view each food and beverage venue as a new opportunity to highlight something special. We look at each outlet with fresh eyes in order to create concepts that are appealing to both our hotel guests and visitors.



Have spas always been an important part of the Montage experience?

Spas have been part of the DNA of Montage since the beginning. Montage Laguna Beach was the very first five-star rated spa in the world. Our spas, like our hotels, have a tremendous sense of place and the treatments are reflective of and take advantage of the incredible locations where we operate.

How do you decide on location when looking to expand the Montage brand?

We are very particular about the markets we select. First and foremost, it must be a market that our customers would want to go to. Fortunately, there are many such exciting places.

From a business perspective, it's important that the markets will support the rates we must

charge in order to provide the level of service that we do. All too often, hotel companies will put luxury properties in markets that can't support the rates necessary to provide a top level of service and there is an inherent disconnect when doing that.

We have stayed laser-focused on putting Montage hotels in locations that can support the luxury rates we need to deliver on our promise to our guests.

What was the vision behind the development of the Pendry brand?

We view Pendry as new luxury; the intersection of design and service. The early generation of lifestyle hotels generally had a great vibe but lacked luxury service levels. We have taken the energy and excitement of lifestyle hotels and coupled it with the style of service that Montage is so known for.

Will growth for both the Montage and Pendry brands be primarily in North America?

Montage will see more international growth in the coming years. It's a brand that is well suited for gateway cities, as well as select resort destinations.

We opened our first international hotel, Montage Los Cabos, last year to rave reviews. This signals the beginning of our international expansion.

We will also see growth internationally for Pendry, but there are still many domestic destinations for that brand as well.

Does providing the Montage level of service lend itself to a certain size property and is that service standard harder at a larger property?

The size of our hotels is market driven. In some markets, we can have larger hotels, but as a general notion, ultra-luxury is better served by smaller properties.

The personalization, customization and relationships that guests have with our staff is essential, and we factor that into all of our developments. ●