

DOWNTOWN

3 OUT-OF-STATE HOTELS TO STAY AT IN 2017



Cafe Boulud at The Brazilian Court

After the holiday season has wrapped and the harsh realities of winter have hit, a lot of folks are ready to get out of town for a vacation. But not all New Yorkers are seeking the same sort of getaway experience. Some are looking for a warmer destination with a pool, while others may seek a place with snow, sports and/or shopping.

In turn, *Downtown* spoke to representatives of three different high-end hotels:

- Leticia Bilotta, General Manager of The Brazilian Court Hotel – Palm Beach, Florida
- Jason Sitte, Director of Sales and Marketing of The Commons – Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Eugenia Simons, General Manager for The Gates Hotel – Key West, Florida

Wherever you may be heading in 2017, be safe and enjoy yourself.

How would you describe your property to someone who has not yet traveled there?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: The Brazilian Court, a historic landmark, is Palm Beach's hidden gem. It is a charming boutique hotel located in the heart of Palm Beach and home to Café Boulud restaurant and Frederic Fekkai Salon. In addition to the finest amenities, The Brazilian Court is known for its attentive and personalized service.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: This industrial schoolhouse chic property embodies a sense of inner-geek in a chic setting, embracing diversity through the common desire to discover, with an uncommon experience. Explorers satisfy the whims of their inner geek with a Book Butler, in-room art galleries, alchemist mixology lessons and Sudoku sleep-ins plus destination diversions curated to enlighten mind, body and soul such as geek to chic makeover at the Aveda Institute headquarters and personal story and book creation at Loft Literary Center.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: The Gates Hotel Key West acts as "the gates" to Key West, located at the entry point of the island. It offers an intimate setting that invites guests to celebrate the island's colorful history and enjoy an authentic Key West experience, providing modern amenities that uniquely combine upscale sophistication and polished service with the island's casual laid-back vibe. We partner with local artisans and brands to create an authentic, unparalleled Key West experience on and off property, giving guests a sense of Hemingway's "old school Key West." Partners include a local rum distillery, with rum sold on property and family-owned cigar factory.

Do you have a favorite feature or amenity of the property?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: There are too many to have one favorite but if I had to choose one, I would say it's the Fatio Courtyard. I consider the Fatio Courtyard the focal point of the hotel, which is surrounded by lush tropical foliage and is where our iconic fountain is centrally-located. The outdoor dining terrace, just steps away from the fountain, offers guests a lovely view of the courtyard. The niches throughout the courtyard are for perfect relaxation, reading a book or gathering with friends.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: My favorite feature of the hotel is the unique and inviting lobby. As you enter the hotel, you're instantly greeted by a warm fireplace, as well as several gathering areas.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: My favorite feature of The Gates Hotel Key West is our pool and bar, Rum Row. It offers a very relaxing and fun experience for our guests. Our staff is extremely friendly, and converse with guests on their stays and provide great advice on what to do while in Key West. An added bonus is the drinks are amazing!



The Gates Hotel

What was the first property or hotel that you ever worked at?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: The Trumbull Marriott in Trumbull, Connecticut.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: The Commons Hotel, of course.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: I got my first job in hotels in 1992. I worked at a cute hotel in midtown New York City called Herald Square Hotel.

What do you wish more people knew about your job?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: The Brazilian Court is a condominium hotel. Therefore, in my position as General Manager, I oversee the hotel operations and also manage the condominium component.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: The amount of relationships that are built, which in turn has created long-term friendships.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: I would like people to know how fortunate I am to have the role of General Manager and to be able to work and lead a team of diverse professionals. A hotel is a family environment and I feel fortunate to provide my team with inspiring means for them to make a living and provide for their families.



The Commons

Do you have a favorite part of your job?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: There are many aspects of my job that I thoroughly enjoy, but one of the highlights is being able to make a guest's experience most memorable.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: I love working with my clients and team and celebrating great successes.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: Hearing from our guests or reading on TripAdvisor how our employees made a difference in their stay. Our staff genuinely cares about our guests and their experience in Key West, and it is very rewarding to hear all about it!

What's the best time of year for someone to visit your resort?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: Winters are a fantastic time to visit [The Brazilian Court](#). Average Palm Beach winters are 75 degrees and blue skies. A typical winter day in Palm Beach includes the beach so we provide the chairs, umbrella, towels, and our guests supply the bathing suit!

Jason Sitte, The Commons: It really depends on the guest's interests. The fall and winter are both amazing for sports fans. Being that we're three blocks away from all of the [Minnesota Gopher sports arenas](#), it brings a very fun atmosphere to campus. In the summer time, we're located near the river where there are several scenic bike trails.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: All year round! All the seasons are beautiful in [Key West](#). It is paradise!



The terrace of The Brazilian Court's Cafe Boulud

When not busy with work, how do you ideally spend your free time?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: I enjoy spending time with my husband and two sons; Jovani, 6, and Gianni, 5.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: Most of my free time is spent with my four amazing children and my wife. We are constantly busy, going from one sporting event to another.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: Jumping into the water either for a swim or any water activity, like paddle-boarding or snorkeling is a wonderful experience!

Where was the last out-of-town vacation you took?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: A week ago, my husband and I took our two sons to Disney's Magic Kingdom.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: The last place we went was to Northern Minnesota's Lake Vermillion. We spent a week with my in-laws.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: I went to Buenos Aires in November.

What is your favorite restaurant near your establishment that you can recommend to our readers?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: Café Boulud, our on-site restaurant, is by far my favorite restaurant in Palm Beach and a favorite of the locals.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: The Commons Hotel's very own Beacon Public House is by far the best restaurant in the area. Having said that, there are about 20 restaurants within walking distance from the property.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: Blue Heaven in Old Town has amazing food and offers a very authentic Key West experience, with roosters roaming around, and all.

When was the last time that you were in New York City? Do you have a favorite restaurant here?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: August of this year. Daniel — I am a big fan of Chef Daniel Boulud and his restaurants in New York and Florida.

Jason Sitte, The Commons: The honest answer is that I have never been to New York City.

Eugenia Simons, The Gates Hotel Key West: I was in New York City last September, and my favorite restaurant is Malaparte in the West Village.

Finally, any last words for the kids?

Leticia Bilotta, Brazilian Court Hotel: If you have not visited the Brazilian Court, add it to your bucket list. It is a must!