

CLASSIC GUIDES

Introducing Luxury Women to Watch 2023

October 12, 2022



Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts is one of several luxury brands featured in the Luxury Women to Watch 2023 honor. Seen here: Four Seasons Private Jet Experience. Image courtesy of Four Seasons

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

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Luxury Daily annually honors smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's list features 25 honorees who have set ambitious goals to achieve in a luxury market that, while growing, is also challenged by continued fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid changes in consumer behavior and technology.

The Luxury Women to Watch 2023 roster includes executives from brands, retailers, agencies, media and design firms, among others. Please read through their responses below to get a sense of their 2023 strategy.

Judging process

Picking the 25 smartest women this year with potential was not easy. Readers were **invited to send** in their nominations. The *Luxury Daily* team also had its own table of candidates.

Once the deadline expired, the *Luxury Daily* team judged the nominees on their merits and whittled the list to those who showed the most promise to push the luxury envelope in 2023.

All judging was based purely on merit and potential to make a difference.

Many thanks as well to those readers who took the time to nominate candidates.

Please read this report from first entry to last, listed alphabetically by honoree's last name. These Luxury Women to Watch are set to distinguish themselves even further in 2023, and raise standards even higher in the luxury business.

Mickey Alam Khan, editor in chief, *Luxury Daily*

(Instagram: @MickeyAlamKhan)

LUXURY WOMEN TO WATCH 2023



Amy Astley

Amy Astley

Global editorial director and U.S. editor in chief

Architectural Digest

New York

"My proudest achievement in luxury is definitely breathing new life into the sleeping beauty that was Architectural Digest"

What do you like most about your job?

There is no doubt that my favorite part of my job is the day the photo-shoot film and/or the video arrives.

As the team and I spend months even years tracking projects, it is very gratifying to have the final results in our hands.

I am always excited to share these images with our audience on all our many platforms: print, social, web and video.

Usually, the photographs exceed my expectations. It is always a moment where I feel great pride in our team, as it takes a village to produce content of this quality.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Communication is so important, especially as *Architectural Digest* is a global brand and we work closely with our fellow ADs in many other markets and time zones.

Architectural Digest is so much more than simply magazines now. Fresh content is appearing daily on the sites, the many social accounts and YouTube, along with in-real-life events, so there are a lot of moving pieces and a lot of platforms.

The operations are complex and there is a lot of content being shared. Fortunately, our teams have a lot of goodwill toward one another and we are very nimble. That helps tremendously.

What is your work priority for 2023?

My top priority for 2023 is to continue to develop *Architectural Digest* globally as one unified team sharing content seamlessly and efficiently.

I have big digital goals for each of *Architectural Digest's* seven markets, especially around traffic, audience and video. So this process has to be perfect.

Architectural Digest's buzzy videos and features often go viral, and for 2023 I am really focusing on creating major cultural moments that resonate with consumers along with the industry.

What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement in luxury is definitely breathing new life into the sleeping beauty that was *Architectural Digest*.

I feel that we have preserved and, in fact, increased the prestige and authority of the product, while also creating cultural buzz and relevance with a fresh and inclusive editorial vision and a thriving digital presence which have won *Architectural Digest* an ever-increasing and younger digital audience.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

In 2023, luxury is certainly evolving to include meaningful experiences.

At *Architectural Digest*, especially post-pandemic, we see a real hunger for special in-real-life events, both for consumers and trade.

I am very focused on how *Architectural Digest* can offer this to readers and to the trade.

I think you see the extension of this in high-end home design, too. People want special pools, gardens, spas, gyms, Pilates studios, screening rooms, yoga and meditation spaces places to either gather or to be alone and to have a transformative experience.



Stephanie Bennett

Stephanie Bennett
Cofounder/president

Diamond Spas Inc.

Frederick, CO

"My priority will be the same as it has been for the past 26 years: making sure Diamond Spas is producing an exceptional, quality product that stands out from other pool and spa manufacturers in the industry"

What do you like most about your job?

Diamond Spas offers a customized product built to client specifications. Therefore, no one project is like the next.

It is incredibly rewarding to walk through the fabrication department and witness the amazing products being built.

Seeing the collaboration between the clients and our design team, then moving forward through engineering and fabrication is an added bonus. The end result is a stunning hand-crafted aquatic product, unique like each one of our clients.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

As with all businesses, supply chain issues were complicated to navigate through during the pandemic.

Diamond Spas fared well, but it was a constant stress ensuring we had metal, jets, pumps, spa controls, et cetera.

We utilize the best manufacturers in the industry for all of our pool and spa equipment. These manufacturers worked closely with us and made Diamond Spas a priority in getting the product needed to build our product. I feel fortunate to say we never missed a ship date.

Thankfully, our inventory stock is back up to 100 percent. Keeping a close eye on the supply chain will be an ongoing task and will continue through 2023.

What is your work priority for 2023?

My priority will be the same as it has been for the past 26 years: making sure Diamond Spas is producing an exceptional, quality product that stands out from other pool and spa manufacturers in the industry.

Our product line is artistic, sophisticated and caters to the needs and stylish preferences of our clients. Our goal has always been to exceed client expectations.

What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement is manufacturing an upscale aquatic product that is sustainable.

The entire Diamond Spas' product line is produced from recycled sheet metal, stainless steel or copper. The recycled content for new stainless-steel sheets lies between 75 to 80 percent.

Our copper sheets come from 95 to 99 percent recycled copper. All Diamond Spas vessel shells are 100 percent recyclable making them fully sustainable.

Stainless steel and copper are wonderful materials to work with. They are eco-compatible, aesthetically appealing and highly durable.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

I believe high-end consumers will continue to invest in outdoor living. These living areas are becoming more extravagant with deluxe outdoor kitchens, multiple pools, spas, cold therapy pools, swim spas, fire features, water features and audio systems.

I believe our clientele will continue to want luxury aquatic products designed and fabricated to meet their personal wants and needs.

Diamond Spas can fabricate any shape, depth, seating arrangement, infinity edges, glass walls, et cetera. The list of what we are capable of fabricating is endless.

I have found that our clientele appreciates the numerous possibilities made available to them when working with the Diamond Spas' team. We admire their creativity and look forward to making their visions become a reality.



Lucrezia Buccellati Wildenstein

Lucrezia Buccellati Wildenstein
Co-creative director

Buccellati

New York

"Using unique sources of inspiration and working to see them come to life through our one-of-a-kind pieces is a true testament to luxury craftsmanship"

What do you most like about your job?

I love expressing myself through design. I also love finding inspiration in the beautiful jewelry I am surrounded by: recent collections, pieces from the archives or new designs that I am working on.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

While it is exciting to continue to find ways to inspire younger generations, it is certainly a balancing act to retain the timeless DNA of Buccellati, while also adapting to the latest trends.

What is your work priority for 2023?

For 2023, our goal is to further expand the market in the United States and strengthen the awareness of Buccellati among new, engaged audiences and clients.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My proudest achievement so far has been working to bring masterpieces from the art world into our jewelry.

Using unique sources of inspiration and working to see them come to life through our one-of-a-kind pieces is a true

testament to luxury craftsmanship.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

In 2023, I believe that offering a unique client experience will continue to be a great focus for luxury.

With that, I foresee a higher demand for custom and bespoke pieces, with a celebration of extraordinary, one-of-a-kind and special luxury items at the forefront of client desires.



Brisa Carleton

Brisa Carleton
CEO

Grace de Monaco

New York

"Luxury connoisseurs are no longer simply focused on products that meet the highest standards of design and creativity, but are now demanding sustainability, transparency and a greater global conscience from the brands they love and choose to purchase"

What do you most like about your job?

It is a privilege to lead a purpose-driven luxury brand that represents such an iconic legacy.

Princess Grace's impact and influence live on not only through her timeless style, which inspires Grace de Monaco, but also through the example she set as a philanthropist and humanitarian.

We have an incredible team at the Grace de Monaco who are equally passionate about our exquisite products, and we take great pride in the fact that all revenues from the sale of Grace de Monaco products support Princess Grace's wish to nurture the brightest stars of tomorrow in theater, dance and film through the Princess Grace Foundation.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

The biggest challenge we faced was creating an entirely new luxury brand that lives alongside established, centuries-old luxury houses globally.

It's incredibly important to us that we stay true to Princess Grace's ethos. During her lifetime she was passionate about supporting young artists and pursuing modern design, so we spent a lot of time ensuring that our fragrances and silks reflect a modern aesthetic that she would have wanted for today, rather than staying tied in the past.

We are fortunate to be working with top French luxury designers, many of whom have a personal link to Monaco, so we are able to obtain real authenticity in everything we create.

What is your work priority for 2023?

2023 is going to be an exciting year for us.

The Grace de Monaco team has worked tirelessly to produce our initial product offering and bring it to market in record time, despite the industry being upended due to inventory and supply chain issues over the last two years.

We launched initially with Neiman Marcus and have a roster of the world's renowned luxury retailers to follow.

Our priority is the global expansion of our brand as our new partnerships come to life in the U.K., Middle East and Asia.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Launching the first-ever luxury brand created entirely for good is our greatest achievement to date.

We created a new business model as a modern way to continue to fund the Princess Grace Awards program whose mission is to uphold her legacy and her passion for supporting emerging artists.

Grace de Monaco is wholly owned by the Princess Grace Foundation, overseen by Prince Albert of Monaco, [and] which supports emerging artists in theater, dance and film.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

Luxury connoisseurs are no longer simply focused on products that meet the highest standards of design and creativity, but are now demanding sustainability, transparency and a greater global conscience from the brands they love and choose to purchase.

I see this emphasis on purpose and positive impact becoming even more important in 2023 and into the future.



Ayesha Coker

Ayesha Coker

Vice president of marketing

Porsche North America

Atlanta

"Even during the current transformational push for electrification and new technologies within the automotive industry, we prioritize our customers, meaning we must continue to meet and exceed their expectations"

What do you most like about your job?

There is nothing like seeing the excitement and joy of someone after having taken the wheel of a Porsche for the first time. Without exception, it warms my heart to see that instant emotional connection that people feel from driving our sports cars.

So, for me, the most gratifying part of the role is creating those unique and memorable luxury brand experiences that'll last a lifetime.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Since assuming my new role overseeing marketing for the U.S., one challenge I have encountered is balancing my new executive committee duties with staying closely engaged with my team, dealers and customers.

While navigating this new territory, I have been fortunate to have a strong and dependable team, which has given me the leeway to prioritize what requires my input while delegating other responsibilities where needed.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Next year marks our 75th anniversary. To celebrate this milestone, we are planning several events that will excite our customers and fans of the brand.

Most noteworthy is our signature event, Rennsport Reunion VII, which is a family reunion of sorts, where we will all gather at Laguna Seca near Monterey, California to celebrate the racing heritage, new products and experiences of Porsche.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

After building a 12-year career with a brand and team you love, I would have to say my recent promotion to vice

president of marketing for Porsche Cars North America is one of my greatest professional achievements. To achieve this goal with a global luxury brand that you believe in and have grown with over the years is truly a privilege.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

For Porsche, taking the customer experience to the next level is the benchmark that we continue to push in a competitive luxury segment.

Even during the current transformational push for electrification and new technologies within the automotive industry, we prioritize our customers, meaning we must continue to meet and exceed their expectations.



Emilie Cotter

Emilie Cotter

Chief communications officer

Audi of America

Washington, DC

"Luxury is at its best when we curate the meaningful connection points between our values, our products and our people"

What do you most like about your job?

Audi of America and the automotive industry, at large, is in the middle of a massive transformation.

I love that my job gives me the opportunity to create new pathways forward and build teams to advance such significant progress.

Audi's focus is to lead the way to an electric, more sustainable future, and communications is a powerful catalyst for that change.

Not only are we driving customers to an entirely new experience with electrification, we are also bringing together key stakeholders and acting as a bridge to drive meaningful progress in the business.

Working in the premium category means that we get to do all of that while delivering unique experiences.

One of the great joys of my job is delivering moments that make people feel special and cared for. I want them to remember Audi as a brand that brings a little memorable magic as well as a fantastic experience through our vehicles.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Without challenge you cannot grow, so I spend a lot of time thinking about the current roadblocks as well as what might be ahead.

My job is to guide teams, to do the right things at the right time, to push the business on the right path and also looking forward to steer the strategic direction that will set the communications framework for the longer term.

That balance of solving immediate business needs while setting the stage for the future is an ongoing challenge that I really love.

What is your work priority for 2023?

My top priority for 2023 is sustainable acceleration moving at speed and scale while taking care of my team. As a brand, our goals and objectives are bold, and we want to push forward aggressively.

I am really aware we need to achieve these ambitions in a way that also places a premium on our people.

Now more than ever, teams need explicit support to build in time and space to create, think and rejuvenate while managing the needs of the business.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I am proud to work for Audi and there are so many programs I could mention from Monterey Car Week to our exceptional dinner series with noma, the launch of our Malibu Design Loft and the creation of our first-ever Audi City Guide.

But what I am really most proud of is that our work has a purpose.

Luxury is at its best when we curate the meaningful connection points between our values, our products and our people.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

There is no singular definition of luxury. It evolves and morphs with trends, cultural moments, economic shifts and individual perspectives. Sometimes it is scarcity, other times it is badging or even the freedom of time and space.

In 2023 I believe "discovery" will play a big role in luxury as time continues to be limited and digital algorithms dictate much of what we see online.

I think experiences, artists and creators off the beaten path will become even more coveted. And as someone who loves to seek out the unexpected, I cannot wait.



Haein Dorin

Haein Dorin

Senior vice president of operations

Highsnobiety

New York

"Working with incredible brands like Gucci, Saint Laurent, Burberry and many more, I am proud to say each production and project we execute continues to innovate from the previous season to evolve with our audience."

What do you most like about your job?

As the general manager and U.S. lead in operations, being able to nurture, grow and support talent across the organization is my passion. Connecting the right individuals across the organization to collaborate and cultivate our best work with brands and editorially.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Highsnobiety, as a rule, never stops looking to the future and, as a result, is continually evolving as a business. It is the best kind of challenge to continue to match that evolution at every step.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Being connected to more brands that are searching for their brand to be rediscovered, and reach the cultural pioneer.

We have had some amazing projects with a variety of brands and have had the opportunity to show up in culture and encourage discovery of the story behind the brand and we would like to continue fostering that growth.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Each story we cover and brand we help reach the cultural pioneer becomes our proudest achievement.

Our team continues to innovate and push the envelope for each project we deliver.

Working with incredible brands like Gucci, Saint Laurent, Burberry and many more, I am proud to say each production and project we execute continues to innovate from the previous season to evolve with our audience.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

The evolution of luxury is something our team is constantly thinking about. A few years ago, we launched a white paper called "The New Luxury," taking a look at some of these pretty seismic shifts which have been taking place in the space.

The work was really well-received by the industry, which was fantastic to see, and so we partnered with Boston Consulting Group to continue to put out forecasting and observations about the luxury space, most recently releasing the "Luxury 3.0" white paper earlier this summer.



Julie Faupel

Julie Faupel
Founder/CEO

REALM Global

Jackson, WY

"At the end of the day, REALM's commitment is to ensure that we are providing tools and connections that optimize the results for our constituents and their clients and producing those outcomes will stay strongly in our purview through 2023"

What do you most like about your job?

I love being a community builder.

Enabling connections that help people thrive in their personal and professional lives is so exciting.

I think that the power and importance of networking has never been more profound and we have a unique opportunity to define how future communities assemble, interact and influence.

The REALM membership is not only a very unique community, but it is also comprised of other "builders" who inspire me with their creativity and desire to shape the future of belonging.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

I think that we are in a period where technology is exacerbating the speed and pace of change more than ever and the importance of connection and communication is critical.

Working in a virtual environment, keeping up with the demands of growth across multiple geographies in tumultuous times is challenging.

Our membership performs at the highest level of service in our industry, and they are constantly elevating.

Maintaining those same standards within REALM is our commitment and we take that responsibility very seriously.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Our focus is bringing REALM to other luxury verticals that help to support the purpose and network of trusted

advisors.

We have had so much fun in 2022 as we have been able to physically convene again and we are excited to welcome other complementary disciplines to the community, both in-person and virtually.

At the end of the day, REALM's commitment is to ensure that we are providing tools and connections that optimize the results for our constituents and their clients, and producing those outcomes will stay strongly in our purview through 2023.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I am humbled that I have had the opportunity to manifest an idea into something that no longer is being shaped by only me and my perception of luxury.

For me, REALM is the luxury achievement that has resulted in connections with people that inspire me and challenge me to be better in all respects of my life what a gift.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

There are so many divisive factors that have shaped our latest chapter in history.

Now, as we are all emerging from a truly transformational time, luxury has an opportunity to bring people even closer together, convening communities and taking down silos.

I see luxury as being technology and innovation-enabled but more human than ever.



Jennifer Fay

Jennifer Fay
Owner

Linen Alley

Jackson, WY

"My priority is fine tailoring the balance between the unparalleled innovation in design and the mastery and sophistication of crafting your own personal sanctuary with the unique combination of luxury bedding and luxury mattresses"

What do you like most about your job?

My favorite part of my job always has been and is still discovering and sourcing the world's finest, most inspired products. Never settling for the ordinary, daily striving to achieve and maintain our legacy as a luxury brand, our distinctive sense of place in Jackson Hole.

My enduring mission: supplying form and function, beauty and comfort together. I cocreated Linen Alley 18 years ago, crafted to provide an elevated shopping experience that is today still rooted in my personal ethos on styling.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

The biggest challenge by far is market volatility and waning consumer confidence.

Coming off the supply chain issues in 2021 and one of the hottest economies, there was huge motivation to maintain a backstock of inventory to meet immediate demand.

But in 2022, with global turmoil and recession fears, it is finding balance. How much and what to inventory to meet these two conflicting demands is very challenging.

What is your work priority for 2023?

I sell the crafted luxury of the everyday. My priority is fine tailoring the balance between the unparalleled innovation in design and the mastery and sophistication of crafting your own personal sanctuary with the unique combination of luxury bedding and luxury mattresses.

As restful sleep takes center stage, the importance of spoiling your senses in dreamy comfort is my everyday priority.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

The story of Linen Alley is a history of serving the community I was born in and love. A store built by women, run by women, beauty and comfort are woven into every fiber of what Linen Alley has to offer.

We have achieved the finest selection and most exquisite collection of products available; impeccably curated by my dream team of capable women with a combined 50-plus years of textile experience. This unparalleled combination is my proudest achievement.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

Luxury has always been synonymous with quality. As prices climb for lower-end pre-luxury items, customers are more conscious about the value of what they buy.

Luxury providers like Linen Alley have a prime opportunity to legitimize and define the authenticity of what luxury is and why the investments in craftsmanship and quality are not just for the most exclusive population. [It is about] form and function, everyday luxury that makes your life better.

In some spaces, like your home, luxury items that perform as exceptionally as they look are being realized as a crucial part of a more healthy and happy life.



Candice Fragis

Candice Fragis

Luxury brand consultant

London

"We were at the forefront of what is now called the circular economy with the aim of de-stigmatizing older season product and re-educating the consumer about quality versus seasonality"

What do you like most about your job?

The diversity of working across a range of businesses and brands, working from the start of the creative process through to the commercial growth strategies. This has evolved within my clients from traditional retail and brands to digital fashion and AI technology.

Sustainability has always been a passion and focus for me from the start of my career. I am now able to be selective with which clients I onboard and only engage with businesses who share that passion, so we are ultimately working towards a common goal of making the industry more conscious and responsible.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

As a consultant, my role is now to advise and help rally teams to make changes and move in new directions without having the full accountability of actioning those changes.

Having notoriously been in very hands-on roles, it can be difficult to step aside and watch how that advice lands.

That said the upside is I too am always learning, from how different teams and businesses navigate change and interpret these strategies, which provides growth and opportunity for me personally.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Helping brands and businesses be more authentically conscious in their product strategy, their core DNA and subsequent messaging whilst incorporating truly sustainable endeavors to their existing and upcoming roadmap.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Being a founding member of launching The Outnet back in 2019 with Natalie Massenet and Stephanie Phair.

We were at the forefront of what is now called the circular economy with the aim of de-stigmatizing older season product and re-educating the consumer about quality versus seasonality.

This is something that is now very well understood and a core proposition for most brands and luxury businesses, yet at the time it was incredibly disruptive within luxury fashion.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

The continued focus on unique brand experiences whilst creating community, direct customer focused service, personalization and digital authentication coupled with digital-twin NFTs.



Linsey Gallagher

Linsey Gallagher
President/CEO

[Visit Napa Valley](#)

Napa, CA

"The biggest challenges for our organization and our nearly 500 hospitality partners often come in the form of circumstances out of our control, such as the pandemic, wildfires and earthquakes, but it is how we respond to these outside influences that makes me proud to be part of Napa Valley's travel and hospitality industry"

What do you most like about your job?

There are many aspects of this role that keep me challenged and motivated.

I have the great privilege of working with a broad range of partners all working at the top of their professions at our resorts, hotels, our country's leading wineries and restaurants to tell the story of Napa Valley.

I feel honored to be a steward of the Napa Valley brand on the world stage. And there is nothing more rewarding than getting to work and contributing in a positive way where I live and play.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

The biggest challenges for our organization and our nearly 500 hospitality partners often come in the form of circumstances out of our control, such as the pandemic, wildfires and earthquakes, but it is how we respond to these outside influences that makes me proud to be part of Napa Valley's travel and hospitality industry.

It never ceases to amaze me how our community comes together during these times with a common goal to respond with a solutions-oriented mindset.

Most recently, we combined efforts with our Napa Valley wine and agriculture industries to fund 24/7 wildfire sensor cameras to help keep our community safe during the remainder of this year's wildfire season.

It is the type of collaborative approach that preserves Napa Valley as the world class destination that it is.

What is your work priority for 2023?

The hospitality industry, in general, was one of the hardest hit during the pandemic and has yet to fully recover to pre-pandemic levels for many destinations.

As a rural, four-season destination with a reputation for a best-in-class hospitality experience, Napa Valley fared better than many destinations and was a bright spot in California's overall recovery.

So, in 2023, my priority for our organization is focused on accelerating Napa Valley's continued economic recovery. That includes not only promoting Napa Valley with marketing initiatives that reach our ideal visitor, but also supporting the industry with smart and thoughtful programs that inspire careers in the Napa Valley, shine a light on the sustainability efforts undertaken by our county, hospitality industries and contribute to solutions that make our community a better place to live and work, such as housing, transportation and recreation.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Coming out of the pandemic, the strength of the Napa Valley brand on the world stage allowed us to recover ahead of the curve, winning back more than our fair share of visitors.

Simply put, today's consumer is willing to pay a premium for the Napa Valley experience and we cannot take that for granted.

For the luxury-minded traveler, Napa Valley was their first, and often their second, trip once they felt ready to travel. But it is often the surprise and delight of our rustic elegance and experiences when visitors come here that creates loyal consumers, who count Napa Valley among their favorite repeat destinations.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

There were several silver linings coming out of the pandemic.

In today's world full of unknowns, time spent with family and friends is the new luxury.

With its scenic beauty and slower pace, Napa Valley is ideally situated to be the backdrop for those meaningful luxury experiences.



Kimberly Grant

Kimberly Grant

Global head of restaurants/bars and senior vice president of food and beverage

Four Season Hotels and Resorts

Washington, D.C.

"What is relevant today may or may not be as relevant in the future and our job is to always differentiate between trends that are fleeting versus ones that will stand the test of time"

What do you most like about your job?

I love the relentless pursuit of excellence taking what is very good to great, and what is great to epic.

As the global head of restaurants and bars at Four Seasons, I am fortunate to lead and inspire the best team of hospitality craftspeople in the world.

To be honest, it is hard for me to call it a job, it is more like a life-long passion I rarely think of myself as "having a

job."

Working hard and excelling have been my life's craft and fashion.

Beginning my career as a server, where I ultimately became president of the publicly traded restaurant company after 21 years there, helped foster an appreciation and focus on deeply entrenched culture and standards of excellence.

I am proud of my journey and love that I get to play a small part in helping others do the same.

There is tremendous pride and passion in the Four Seasons mission and value system, it is simply wonderful to be a part of.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

There are many near-term challenges in the hospitality industry, especially now post-pandemic.

However, long-term my team's biggest challenge is anticipating the future needs of our guests.

In most of our projects, we begin working on the curation of the restaurant and bar portfolio within the hotel as early as five years before opening.

Our success is driven by our ability to be forward thinking, bold and innovative in not only the design of the food and beverage outlets, but also the cuisines they feature and the format they are provided.

What is relevant today may or may not be as relevant in the future and our job is to always differentiate between trends that are fleeting versus ones that will stand the test of time.

What is your work priority for 2023?

We are focused on improving the single view of our guests from a restaurant and bar perspective.

Our restaurants and bars are an important gateway to the Four Seasons brand and serve as the heartbeat of many of our hotels around the world.

That said, many of our restaurants and bars also compete directly in the local dining scene and have become dining destinations in their own right.

Our efforts in 2023 focus around understanding the needs of not only guests staying in our hotels, but also guests who travel and live in the market and frequent our restaurants and bars. These groups are equally important to our overall business model and may not always have the same needs or communication preferences. This is a capability we want to further refine, and plan to do so through tech capabilities, CRM, data and insights, and more.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Leading by example.

I have been fortunate along my career journey to have had many mentors that saw potential in my abilities and gave me the opportunity to learn and grow.

My most trusted mentor exposed me to the luxury sector and offered me the opportunity to serve as a friend, advisor and board member to Blackberry Farm.

But he also demonstrated early in my career that women have no career limits.

By the 1990s, he already had accomplished women on our board of directors, and most of his executive team, of which I was a part, were women.

For the last five years, I have been serving on the board of PFGC, a Fortune 200 public company.

And now at Four Seasons, I feel like I have joined yet another industry-leading organization that is committed to valuing inclusivity and belonging as a key differentiator in our success.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

The concept of frictionless experiences is something I see emerging and evolving in 2023.

Luxury and ultra-luxury products and experiences are more costly than ever. The Cost of Living Extremely Well Index (CLEWI) took the biggest jump since 2008 and is nearly double the U.S. Consumer Price Index.

The luxury consumer is paying more for the same products and experiences, and frictionless moments are what will differentiate and balance the value equation in my opinion.

People with means are willing to pay for quality and excellence, but the need and expectation for accessing the product, service or experience easily and seamlessly that is what money cannot always guarantee.

At Four Seasons, luxury is truly our love language and that means delivering experiences that minimize friction and create those "forever" moments for our guests.



Rani Grube

Rani Grube
Managing director

Chateau du Sureau

Fresno, CA

"Providing luxury service requires staying two steps ahead of the guests who consistently create hospitality challenges through their diverse personalities and expectations"

What do you most like about your job?

There is a degree of gratification that can only be achieved by leading a team that garners respect [by] providing exceptional hospitality. This is ongoing and consistent and the satisfaction it brings me never gets old.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Providing luxury service requires staying two steps ahead of the guests who consistently create hospitality challenges through their diverse personalities and expectations. But this is what true world-class hospitality is all about, and as the leader of a team of service professionals, it is my duty to inspire them to do the best that can be done.

What is your work priority for 2023?

The future of hospitality does not rely on the physical amenities that a hotel provides. One can find the facilities, services and amenities that they require at numerous establishments throughout one's travels.

What differentiates properties now, and in the future, lies in the hands of the personal attention bestowed upon every guest. I believe in 2023 this will become more and more apparent, and I intend to continue to make it my mission to staff and train my team with this as my top priority.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My proudest achievement is to be able to receive my returning guests who insist on including me as part of the special moments and anniversaries they celebrate with us. It is a heartwarming privilege.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

As stated earlier, the personal service provided by the property will become more prominent when one defines true luxury travel.



Marci Hirshleifer Penn

Marci Hirshleifer Penn

Global personal shopping director/women's buyer

Hirshleifers

Manhasset, NY

"Nowadays, a new campaign shoot or collection is not just that it is a huge story that the brand is telling"

What do you most like about your job?

I love the way a great outfit can really transform a person's self. It adds this little spark when it is done right, so I love seeing that moment in my clients and being there for a lot of their special life moments.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

My job is very on, on, on and I love that about it.

I love working with my family every day and making sure my clients are happy with their purchases and the help we give them.

That being said, my biggest challenge is knowing when I need to switch off and take a second with my family or myself.

Now, I am incredibly lucky to have a team of two women and myself who really love what we do as much as I do and we are able to share that load.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Getting back to fashion week.

This year is the first year since COVID-19 we have traveled for fashion week and we are slowly getting back into that routine. I miss it so much and my clients really love that inside access, so next year is all about that.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My proudest achievement in luxury is how incredibly driven and strong my family is as a unit.

This is around the 112th year our store has been operating and it is such a testament to my mom and her two sisters and my uncle and cousins.

We all work really hard in our respective fields throughout the store, and we all take such pride in how the store operates. Here's to another 112 years.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

I think luxury is evolving in storytelling, which is organically what Hirshleifer has always been about.

Nowadays, a new campaign shoot or collection is not just that it is a huge story that the brand is telling.

I think a big reason why a lot of physical retail stores did not work out in the past is because there was not that storytelling.

My family and I are in the store five days a week, we are on the floor, we are talking to clients and I think that really shows.



Renyung Ho

Renyung Ho

Senior vice president, brand HQ

Banyan Tree Group

Singapore

"The luxury industry expresses the highest values of a society at any one time the more we spend on investing in our own growth, the better choices we will make"

What do you most like about your job?

Designing and bringing experiences to life in beautiful nature-based settings around the world.

Our brand of hospitality is about discovering magic in everyday life and evoking a sense of greater interconnectedness.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Defining and executing our vision of "good growth" growing our footprint and positive impact at the same time, whilst minimizing the negative impact of our operations and the travel industry.

Given our founding origins in the tin mine transformation of Laguna Phuket, we aim to be an exemplar for the "green transition" of our generation.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Evolving our branded experiences and business model into the digital arena and creating purposeful value for our loyal Banyan Tree community.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Defining it in the light of personal growth, and conscious choice and consumption.

The luxury industry expresses the highest values of a society at any one time the more we spend on investing in our own growth, the better choices we will make.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

Nature as luxury, a return to the wild and harnessing the mind are megatrends we see continuing, and which we have begun to create with Banyan Tree Escape and Banyan Tree Veya.



Guia Llamas
Hotel manager

Baccarat Hotel

New York

"My focus will be on maintaining or better yet, surpassing the results we achieved this year and coming up with ideas and initiatives that will add value and continuously differentiate Baccarat Hotel New York from other luxury hotel groups"

What do you like most about your job?

I have been very fortunate to have found what I love to do at the very beginning of my career and even more fortunate to have met individuals who held my hand and walked me through this journey.

In my current role, there are many things that I truly enjoy, but most particularly, building a brand and setting the stage for future Baccarat hotels and resorts, the entrepreneurial spirit and the opportunity to make a difference and to give back.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

The balancing act of making all stakeholders equally happy. I know this is rarely possible but getting to at least 85 percent would be ideal. This keeps me on my toes heels, actually.

Staying true to the values I was taught and the discipline that I developed certainly helps.

What is your work priority in 2023?

My focus will be on maintaining or better yet, surpassing the results we achieved this year and coming up with ideas and initiatives that will add value and continuously differentiate Baccarat Hotel New York from other luxury hotel groups.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I am most proud of being part of the pre-opening team of Baccarat Hotel New York. Everything I experienced there was truly special including working with the designers, going to the maison and manufactory in France, seeing the artists install their work, listening to the Baccarat craftsmen passionately talk about the crystals, collaborating with the team in putting the standards together and witnessing the hotel come to life as each chandelier and all crystal pieces were installed.

I have previously opened hotels under different brands but nothing compared to the extent of this opening. I still get goosebumps when I look back at this experience eight years ago. It was indeed rewarding, both personally and professionally, and it has stayed with me after all these years.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

The traditional definition of luxury in terms of quality and value will remain.

However, the audience will be wider or may be different considering the younger generations that have emerged in the top-tier market segment. The focus will continue to shift to include social responsibility.

While we all believe human contact is important in the luxury world, increased digital services and technology will undoubtedly come into play.

I anticipate more collaborations amongst luxury brands.

We have started seeing this evolution now and I can only imagine this becoming stronger and more evident in the coming years. I am excited.



Jennifer Locke

Jennifer Locke
CEO

Crimson Wine Group

Napa, CA

"There is very little tolerance or room for missteps, so we are hyper-focused on brilliant execution on all aspects of commercial business and increasing our wine quality"

What do you most like about your job?

I like creating and being part of high-performing teams that galvanize around a shared mission, goal or objective.

I have worked in siloed, blame-game companies, and I much prefer working with talented, collaborative and kind coworkers, like the ones I have at Crimson.

We put the physical and mental wellness of our people first not reopening wineries unless it is safe to do so, allowing employees to work remotely as needed, et cetera.

This emphasis on wellness and collaborative culture has helped us grow our business significantly and execute major structural changes to wholesale partnerships and commercial teams during the COVID-19 era, when a lot of our competitors have lost share. And, of course, our wines.

It is an honor to steward the properties in our portfolio, and I take great pride in knowing that what we create brings our customers joy.

Our wines are shared across family dinner tables, uncorked in Michelin-starred restaurants, carefully saved by collectors for special occasions and glasses are raised at important milestones.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

I started at Crimson two months before the COVID-19 lockdown and not long before major California wildfires impacted our team and harvest, threatening both the lives and livelihoods of our people.

As CEO, my job is to look forward and prepare for the future to focus on the organization's vision and mission.

It has been challenging to lead the team through the external pressures of the last few years, while also gearing up the company for the future.

All the change, hardships and uncertainty have helped build our resiliency, though, and made restructuring our teams and wholesale route-to-market perhaps a bit easier, or at least not as daunting, in retrospect.

I am pleased with our overall performance and am focused now on implementing our long-term strategic plan.

What is your work priority for 2023?

The number one commodity in the luxury space is time. We want our customers to feel like their time with us is well-spent and enjoyable.

To bring our unique brand identities to life, we design luxury experiences online, in stores and in-person that all share the same brand DNA and messaging.

It seems simple, but executing at a high level takes the entire team to be aligned, including our external partners.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

While the wine segment is under a fair amount of pressure from premium spirits and RTDs, the high-end, luxury wine segment is growing.

At Crimson, we are investing and repositioning our core luxury brands, and taking share from competitors in the process.

While some in our industry have stalled or retrenched, we have invested in and upgraded our tasting rooms, vineyard properties, wine quality, customer-service technology and wholesale partnerships.

I am proud of how we have leaned into our luxury brand proposition and made sure it is delivering.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

In the wine space, the next 24 months will be a defining time for many brands.

Many wineries are coming off shorter vintages and significant channel swings, from off-premise to ecommerce and then to on-premise, as customers returned to restaurants and bars.

Those wineries that have strong brand affinity and reacted to the consumer's desire to channel-shift over the last two-and-a-half years should have, hopefully, built brand equity.

That was our goal at Crimson. We have taken prices in line with our categories but are carefully watching our re-order rates by channel and account.

Our more established brands, like Pine Ridge Vineyards and Seghesio Family Vineyards, tend to do very well in times of turmoil.

With inflation and uncertainty in the economy, the well-established brands that best deliver on the value proposition usually prevail.

There is very little tolerance or room for missteps, though, so we are hyper-focused on brilliant execution of all aspects of commercial business and increasing our wine quality.



Molly Melville

Molly Melville

Brand ambassador

The Macallan

New York

"Getting to be a part of a movement which challenges mindsets and pushes boundaries of centuries old traditions is also something I thrive at and I am proud to be a part of that journey"

What do you most like about your job?

The Macallan has given me so many opportunities to connect with people from all walks of life through my storytelling, whether it be introducing individuals to The Macallan or sharing a dram of whisky with lifelong fans.

Educating those not only about a passion of mine, but also [about] my home of Scotland is a dream come true.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Being a young female in a male-dominated industry has been my biggest challenge.

However, getting to be a part of a movement that challenges mindsets and pushes boundaries of centuries-old traditions is also something I thrive at, and I am proud to be a part of that journey.

What is your work priority for 2023?

My work priority for 2023 is to continue finding new ways to be inclusive in an exclusive industry. Using social media is a great tool that allows me to make new connections.

I aim to bring fresh ideas and new opportunities to introduce The Macallan to an evolving and diverse clientele.

I am also very lucky to have the opportunity to partner with inspiring individuals and look forward to partnering with more in 2023.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

Launching our exclusive Distil Your World New York in the iconic Rainbow Room in Rockefeller Plaza is my proudest achievement in luxury.

Originating from a rural area in Speyside, Scotland, I never imagined I would be center stage of one of New York's major landmarks toasting to over 200 people with an awe-inspiring skyline view featuring the Empire State Building as the backdrop. It is a memory I will cherish forever.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

Luxury is constantly evolving and in order to engage with a new generation of luxury consumers, a strong focus on sustainability is vital. I am grateful to be part of The Macallan whose recent sustainability efforts reflect these values.

For example, The Macallan has a new energy efficient distillery in Speyside which helps protect the environment and supports biodiversity. We now have 90 percent electric vehicles on the estate and electric car chargers for our guests and employees.

Additionally, sustainability continues to be at the forefront for The Macallan through their global partnership with Bentley Motors, where the two work together to create a more sustainable future by unveiling their first product collaboration concept: The Macallan Horizon, the inspirational and highly innovative limited-edition single malt whisky.



Tina Necrason

Tina Necrason

Executive vice president for residential

Montage International

Irvine, CA

"There is a transformation occurring within luxury between both the classic and established consumer and a new luxury consumer"

What do you most like about your job?

What I like most about my job is having the opportunity and flexibility within my residential business discipline to work autonomously, which allows for growth and is a stimulant to challenge ourselves to think outside the box whether it is related to processes, implementing new programs, enhancing our offerings or working with our talented teams on their development. It can all be achieved while being fully supported by our core business partner within our hospitality enterprise. It is incredibly inspiring and dynamic to work within this type of environment.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

The greatest challenge in my work is managing business growth and mitigating risks of volatility in our luxury real estate environment. It is critical to the success of our overall business to maintain the integrity of our core service standards and practices to enrich the lives of our owners.

Each day having the agility to move between strategic and tactical initiatives as we continue to grow our portfolio all within a competitive landscape while carefully managing all of the daily and critical aspects of my role, can be difficult to delicately balance, alongside all of the unexpected situations that might arise in the midst of it all.

Every significant challenge, however, brings opportunity.

I thrive in tackling every new situation with laser focus to deliver solutions that will address needs both short and long term.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Looking ahead to 2023, my work priority is planning for new innovations by implementing new real estate offerings.

Each year I look at ways to increase our benchmarks of success, leveraging momentum coming from recent events like Pendry Residences West Hollywood, where we achieved record-breaking real estate prices this summer and going into next year is no exception.

I am planning with our team for the launch of a new real estate product geared towards enhancing the luxury lifestyle offering, but with a fresh view and alternative to our more traditional residential projects. It will provide a new way for brand loyalists and those seeking a personalized approach to fully serviced living, a way to enjoy the benefits of ownership, commensurate with their personal desire for time with their families.

My aim is to try and bring to market a new concept with precision and thoughtfulness around leveraging our core business model.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I was fortunate in the early days of my career to be part of the core team in the concept, creation and execution of a luxury brand extension at The Ritz-Carlton Club, which afforded me the opportunity for an invaluable foundation, that has served me well in every capacity throughout my career in the luxury space.

It truly fueled my passion for luxury and the lessons learned and the great responsibility early on to protect the integrity of an iconic brand. To nurture it, grow it and appreciate all that comes with it has resulted in my proudest achievement to date.

If not for having a role at that time at the inception of the business line, I do not think I would have been exposed or supporting the drive of those valuable lessons and experiences which allowed me to grow. That perspective rooted me in my beliefs and understanding of luxury in many unexpected ways.

This has been an important milestone that I am so grateful to have recognized many years ago and look forward to another pinnacle achievement in the future, whereby I can impact and contribute much more to the world of luxury.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

Based on luxury global trends and the continued demand for goods and services within every sector of luxury, I believe 2023 will bring some new perspective, particularly within some of the more established brands.

The focus over the past few years has been to create more personalized relationships with customers and strengthen brand affinities and experiences.

As the basis related to these movements, I think 2023 might include an enhanced view of focusing perhaps on quality versus quantity and an elevated focus on loyalty, along with customized products and services to meet the needs and desires of the luxury consumer and the insight as to what drives their lifestyle.

In addition, I think we will see the value and interest in perhaps a younger demographic and seek ways to take the principles of a brand and speak to what resonates with a new luxury buyer focused on both short-term and long-term aspects.

There is a transformation occurring within luxury between both the classic and established consumer and a new luxury consumer.



Myra Nourmand

Myra Nourmand
Principal

Nourmand & Associates

Beverly Hills, CA

"In a soft market, the brokers who truly know the business are the ones who are going to shine"

What do you like most about your job?

There is always something new around the corner. Every phone call is an opportunity to meet someone new and work with them.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

There is never enough time. Everybody gets 24 hours and you have to be organized and focused to fit in all the showings, marketing, advertising and socializing.

What is your work priority for 2023?

To continue to stay in touch with all my previous clients and friends. To continue on the same path.

I am so blessed, I cannot complain. Business is always a good and I want to find a way to continue serving the people I have worked for in the past 35-plus years.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I have sold some of the most iconic homes and represented some of the most amazing clientele.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

I think there is going to be a correction in the market. It is already starting.

I sell more in the worst market because that's when agents are really able to hone in on their skills.

In a soft market, the brokers who truly know the business are the ones who are going to shine.



Keri Richardson

Keri Richardson
Global director of consumer engagement

The Estee Lauder Companies

Atlanta

"Ironically, the biggest challenge is probably what keeps our work exciting: the dynamic pace at which beauty and wellness moves"

What do you like most about your job?

I am privileged that my job is centered around meaningful storytelling.

I have the unique opportunity to reflect consumer experiences back to them through the lens of prestige beauty, which changes how beauty is represented to everyone.

Developing inspiring campaigns that have a cultural connection to your community is always fulfilling.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Ironically, the biggest challenge is probably what keeps our work exciting: the dynamic pace at which beauty and wellness move.

Staying relevant in such a competitive landscape requires creativity and the ability to meet the growing expectations of consumers.

You not only have to provide exceptional products and services, but your content surrounding that has to be consistent, engaging, authentic and quick.

What is your work priority for 2023?

Luxury consumers are younger, more financially independent and much better informed, which allows them to often see through the marketing noise.

So, my priority for 2023 is finding new ways to excite and expand our base, focusing on authentic storytelling, enriching retail experiences and technologically-integrated touch points.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I have had a few important moments in my career, but the launch of our Texture Series at Aveda was an especially proud one.

A long history of Eurocentric beauty standards has impacted the way in which Black women relate to, care for and love their hair. This project focused on the expansion of Aveda's education on textured hair and explored the range of journeys of Black haircare.

To me, Black women seeing themselves reflected lovingly in beauty spaces brings healing and truth.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

The face of luxury is certainly evolving, and millennials and Gen Zers are becoming critical growth levers in this sector.

Moving forward, brands will need to provide emotionally engaging, bespoke experiences, both digital and physical, for a younger generation of consumers.



Mimi Sheng

Mimi Sheng

General manager

Whatnot

New York

"More of the industry will take building digital and hybrid experiences with their customers to the next level. This trend accelerated during the pandemic out of necessity, but there will be even more innovative ways to do so"

What do you like most about your job?

The people I work with every day and the relationships I have built. I am so grateful to work on products that I love with so many thoughtful people.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

This is such a dynamic industry. Every day is different and the biggest challenge is juggling so many priorities, but it is a lot of fun.

What is your work priority for 2023?

To respond quickly to a changing environment, always keeping the customer at the center of everything we do.

Tastes, trends and behaviors are evolving more rapidly than ever, and we have to be willing to be flexible.

Just because something has always been done a certain way does not mean it is still the "right" way.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

At Whatnot, we are building a new way for customers and communities to interact with their favorite products and brands through exciting live auctions. It is rewarding to see people connect over a shared passion.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

More of the industry will take building digital and hybrid experiences with their customers to the next level. This trend accelerated during the pandemic out of necessity, but there will be even more innovative ways to do so.

More of the industry will also continue to embrace sustainability, something that is especially top-of-mind for today's young consumers.



Olivia Steele

Olivia Steele

Cofounder and president/CEO

Conversation Couture

Austin, TX

"The reason why companies choose Conversation Couture is because they understand we are part of the future of luxury, where technology is one piece and education and upskilling their sales team is the other missing piece of the puzzle"

What do you most like about your job?

For me, it is about the results the empowerment for the sales specialist that directly affects the sales for the business.

We are empowering the sales specialist to upskill in virtual retail sales.

It is something that has never existed before, and it is giving them the confidence individually where it is so impactful for the businesses. So it is two-fold.

You have the empowerment of your sales specialist knowing how to sell in a one-to-one virtual setting, driving sales in a virtual environment and taking advantage of this new opportunity that directly impacts the business in a positive way. They can see upwards of 30 percent sales increase month-over-month just by upscaling their sales individuals.

If the sales specialists feel confident in their ability to sell in a virtual environment through live streaming, chat box or virtual in-store experiences or a virtual meeting it will empower them to want to use the technology that the company has already invested in.

So to me, it is truly a win-win. It is what I love about my job the most, seeing that in action and seeing how positively it affects businesses and individuals.

What is your work priority for 2023?

We are focused on getting as many sales specialists trained and certified as possible.

Luxury is a feeling and customers need virtual experiences that emulate the in-person experience, so they can gain trust in the virtual sales channel.

Our goal is to become the house of retail education, and that is no small adventure.

We are focused on building out our programs and bringing on partners to enhance the programs.

Also, we will continue working with technology companies and partnering with them to educate sales specialists on where the market is moving and provide the skills they need to be successful moving forward in the virtual sales channel. This includes:

Bringing on industry professionals to enhance the coursework and the certification programs.

Matching where technology is going, partnering with technology companies, and continuing to grow the education offerings.

Making sure that the retail sales specialists and companies have the necessary training and development to make sure that they stay relevant in this space of what the customer is demanding in regards to the interactions they're having with the sales specialist in a virtual environment.

My biggest priority is matching all of those things together.

For the retail sales specialist, there is an ample amount of programs in every other facet it seems, like data analytics and marketing. However, virtual retail sales is such a new and exciting piece of where the market is moving.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

My proudest achievement is definitely the fact that I found a gap in the marketplace and created a solution. When I was doing my own shopping online, I realized that the experience was so, so hard, and I knew it could be better.

Finding that gap, executing a solution and delivering that to retail sales specialists and businesses is something that I am going to be proud of forever.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

The future of luxury is something that's part of my daily conversations. I think about it this way:

In-person interaction with customers is unlike no other. However, in my world, I interface with technology companies on a daily basis that are creating ways to facilitate human interaction as if it were in-person.

In 2023, we are going to see a really big shift in what the customer expectations are and the experience they're expecting to receive in a virtual setting. I believe it is going to be essential for the luxury sales specialist to be educated on how they can maximize the new virtual sales channel.

There is a lot of talk about the new-age shopper and Gen Z. Right now, the luxury market has a unique opportunity to set the industry standard, including how the interactions in a virtual sales environment will go for those customers: that one-to-one personalized, luxurious, memorable shopping experience.

The reason why companies choose Conversation Couture is because they understand we are part of the future of luxury, where technology is one piece and education and upskilling their sales team is the other missing piece of the puzzle.

It will be exciting to be part of the transformation.



Anne Wilkinson

Anne Wilkinson
Design principal

BAMO

San Francisco

"Coming out of the pandemic we saw the idea of wellness take precedence. Now that's expanding to the idea of wholeness, creating environments where wellbeing and happiness and connecting to other people are central elements"

What do you most like about your job?

I relish the process of creating a new style language for each project, which involves an exciting stage of exploration and discovery.

Finding a talented local artisan or being inspired by unique regional architecture brings me great joy.

Pulling from a wide range of sources, the resulting design vocabulary builds a visual story that is distinct to that place, to the people and the culture that defines them.

I approach every project, whether a luxury resort in Bora Bora, a high-rise residential tower in Bangkok, or a beach house in California, with a fresh curiosity.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

Bringing something unexpected to each project is a challenge I put on myself.

Exceeding a client's expectations, by understanding their needs better than they were able to put into words, is my goal.

Personally, though, not having enough hours in the day is my biggest challenge.

The design industry is constantly reinventing itself and designers need to stay on top of what's happening in order to stay informed and relevant.

That makes my job challenging, but continually fascinating.

There are so many things I could do, need to do and want to do, that it is important to prioritize how my time is spent.

My work can be consuming, but I am careful to balance that with downtime, relaxing with family and friends.

What is your work priority for 2023?

We have all had this collective "reset" and have come out the other side with new priorities, values and motivations.

At a high level, I am focused on the growth of BAMO, leading the firm into the future.

It is a good point in time to explore new directions. Clients are looking at crossover markets, resetting their own brands and everyone is aligning how we feel internally with how we live externally.

At a micro level, I am excited about traveling again, exploring new artists and resources that may have been developed over the past few years, but remain yet untapped.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

We have worked with so many incredible clients over the years, and my proudest achievements are when a client

returns to us for a renovation or a new project.

My first project leading the charge as a principal at BAMO is the Waldorf-Astoria Miami Hotel & Residences, which has been a huge success in terms of both design and in the real estate market with record-breaking sales.

Because of the shared vision and mutual respect developed through that project, I am now working with the same client on several other developments.

Gaining the trust of international luxury clients and elite brands such as Waldorf-Astoria is a great honor.

On the opposite end of the spectrum, a few years ago, BAMO was invited to design space for the Ronald McDonald House at Stanford, which is a home-away-from-home and a cost-effective lifeline for families of children with life-threatening illnesses receiving treatment at the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital.

Not only was this an opportunity to provide pro bono, luxury services for the greater good, but it was a moving experience to talk to the families, and understand how design could impact their emotional wellbeing, to provide comfort, support and inclusivity.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

We have been shifting away from the "traditional" notion of luxury for a while.

Coming out of the pandemic, we saw the idea of wellness take precedence. Now that's expanding to the idea of wholeness, creating environments where wellbeing and happiness and connecting to other people are central elements.

I think this idea will continue to evolve, and we will look to create opportunities for people to form human connections, travel with purpose and use design as a conduit to enhance and live a more meaningful life.



Alicia Williams

Alicia Williams

Vice President of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)

Saks

New York

"In DEI work, particularly in luxury, the biggest challenge is demystifying what luxury looks like and who it is for across communities who may have been historically excluded"

What do you most like about your job?

As vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) at Saks, I love being part of a team that values both my presence and voice at the table.

I am empowered to show up to work as myself every single day, and I see that level of authenticity across the company.

Saks has made tremendous progress in DEI, but also recognizes that this is a journey and there is always room for more growth, development and advancement.

Saks CEO Marc Metrick and fellow leaders' support of our DEI strategy give me the inspiration I need to be innovative and fearless. It is the Saks way.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

In DEI work, particularly in luxury, the biggest challenge is demystifying what luxury looks like and who it is for across communities who may have been historically excluded. There is a lack of trust that extends well beyond the last two years of civil and social unrest.

This means being willing to think outside of the box as we do at Saks, continuing to educate ourselves even in positions such as DEI leader and formulating our strategy in ways that will encourage collaboration and inclusion along the journey.

What is your work priority for 2023?

My work priority for 2023 is continuing to execute Saks' three-year DEI roadmap, which is focused on our purpose, people, culture and brand.

I am also working toward the next phase of our DEI strategy overall, placing a greater emphasis on advancing equity.

While equality is making things fair, equity is leveling the playing field across luxury, which we are working to do at Saks. This includes how we enact change in policies, metrics and the ways in which we communicate and operate to keep momentum and reinforce our goals in inclusivity and belonging, retention and development and recruiting and hiring.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

I am proud to have joined a company that is committed to advancing its pipelines, amplifying racially and ethnically diverse brands, elevating its community service efforts and expanding learning and development opportunities for employees.

Working to further develop our programs, initiatives, onboarding, talent development and recruiting for our most impacted diversity segments and communities in partnership with our marketing, merchandising and people leadership teams has been as inspiring as it is rewarding. Looking ahead, I am excited to see it all unfold.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2023?

As the face of luxury continues to change, so will the way companies define impact in order to stay relevant.

Now and in the future, there is greater demand for fearlessness, accountability and clear definitions of success in support of communities that have been historically marginalized and underrepresented in luxury.

In 2023 and beyond, the industry will need to continue championing evolving DEI efforts to demonstrate to employees, consumers, brands and the entire industry that DEI is not sporadic and it is more than heritage months and hashtags.