



Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

May – Aug 2023, Issue 7

** A periodic newsletter publication by Les Clefs d'Or International / www.lesclefsdor.org / 12 Rue Cambon, 75001 Paris **

From the President's Desk

Dear Members,

First of and foremost, I would like to send my deepest appreciation to all the members who attended the 67th International Les Clefs d'Or Congress in Istanbul. After almost 4 years of hiatus, we finally got to meet each other in person, created connections and felt the love of how much we longed for each other. This event will not be that successful without everyone's presence and to Les Clefs d'Or Turkiye lead by President Adnan Oner, who made the event as extravagant and memorable for all the attendees as possible.

I would like to congratulate the newly appointed and re-elected Executive Committee of UICH who will be with me during my mandate. I also would like to thank our Honorary President & Sage, Zone Directors and also congratulate the newly elected Zone Directors.

Thank you for being with us from day 1 until the end of the congress. The event was a success with all your guidance and support!

With the upcoming 12th UICH Pan-Asian Congress to be held in Langkawi, Malaysia on the 10th to 13th of September 2023 and next International Congress in Bali, Indonesia more members are expected to join us.

I would also like to thank the Education Committee for making sure that all have a take home learnings that members can share with our future aspiring members and young concierges. And also, to thank them for arranging our Guest Speakers:- **Sharon Brambut**, Senior Director of Operations, Rooms, of Four Season Hotels & Resorts; **Hermann Elger**, CEO Forbes Travel Guide; **Pinar Kartal Timer**, Founding Partner Next Phase Consultancy; **Manny Judge**, Director, Talent Acquisition PNW of Fairmont Hotels & Resorts; and facilitated by **Mark Patterson** Strategy Consultant and CEO of 360 and a longtime friend of Les Clefs d'Or.

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Randy Santos
President,
Les Clefs d'Or International

From the President's Desk

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Thank you, CSR Committee, who thought and planned out of the box and made a huge impact on helping those victims of the earthquake in Turkiye with the support of our members. To those members who made the effort to bring some used clothes, toys and to have the mini fundraising just to help. This will be forever kept in those victims' hearts how we gather and help our fellow country.

To the Award Committee dedicated to Denis O'Brien who has been a mentor to many, the committee chair Angelica Miozza and to all the participants, I must say all of you have shown your best and dedication. I am encouraging you to step forward and be part of our committees so that you can contribute and expand your knowledge within the UICH. A big congratulation to Magali Brandariz for the job well done showing her passion, ideas, dreams and love for our organization. Looking forward to more participants for the next Les Clefs d'Or Award.

Thank you to Partnership Committee for helping and assisting the event and making it possible to gather sponsors. And last but not least, the Communication Committee for their consistency in updating and sharing with our members through our social media platform.

And to our Immediate Past President, **Anders Jensen**, your term was not easy due to the worldwide crisis caused by the Pandemic but you conquered it and I thank you for being an excellent President and a good friend and your guidance during my mandate is highly appreciated for the betterment of the federation.

Viva Les Clefs d'Or!

In service through friendship,

Randy V. Santos
President – Les Clefs d'Or (U.I.C.H.)

Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates is a periodical newsletter published independently by the Communications Committee of UICH Les Clefs d'Or, highlighting the activities carried by members across the globe. Should you wish to share your respective section news or activities or be featured in future publications, kindly forward them via email to: assistantsecretary@lesclefsdor.org

Your Les Clefs d'Or **Key Updates**

Introducing, the newly-elected UICH Les Clefs d'Or
International Executive Committee, 2023/2025



Anders Ølsted Jensen
Past President
DENMARK



Randy Santos
President
QATAR



Dimitri Ruiz
Int'l Representative for President's
office in Paris
FRANCE



James Ridenour
1st Vice President
AUSTRALIA



Brian Mackenzie
2nd Vice President
HOLLAND



Robert Marks
3rd Vice President
USA



Burak Ipekci
General Secretary
GREAT BRITAIN



Sharezal Abdul Wahid
Assistant General Secretary
MALAYSIA



Mathieu Glaser
Treasurer
FRANCE

Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

The Corporate Social Responsibility Committee

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Committee is thrilled to announce its latest initiatives.

During the last International Congress that happened in Istanbul, we had two campaigns aiming to help those affected by the Earthquake in Turkey and Syria. We collected countless clothes, toys, and blankets that were donated to Sevgi Mağazası Yardımlaşma ve Dayanışma Derneği.

In addition to that some sections made monetary donations to Darüssafaka:

- India: 535 USD, 270 euros and 28025 Turkish Lira that they collected selling the kurtas.
- Australia: 200 euros that they collected selling the ties and cufflinks.
- Germany: 1000 euros
- Qatar: £700
- Portugal: 2500 euros selling a signed jersey t-shirt from Fenerbahçe to Mr. E.Ugurcan Ügümü from Cachet one of the Congress Sponsors.
- Finland: 100 euros.
- Switzerland: CHF 2000,00



Additionally, Darüssafaka was present at the Congress marketing place where they were selling some products, and all the money was reversed to help those that needed it. Also, there were many donations made online direct to our members.

We would like to thank all of you that were able to help and a very special thank you to all our friends from Les Clefs d'Or Turkey specially Derya Koçak, Cem Boztepe and all the bellteam from CVK for they tremendous support to make this happen.

In caring through friendship,

CSR Family



Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

Les Clefs d'Or Australia

SECTION UPDATES

Les Clefs d'Or Australia has had a very busy 2022-2023, whilst Covid did negatively affect our overall membership, we were blessed to retain a strong core group of Concierge and have some exciting talent upcoming and incoming from overseas. We are all feeling the pressure of recruitment, and this remains a challenge throughout Australia, however it is slowly improving as we see a strong return of tourism in all major cities in Australia.

Luckily enough, we've been able to attract some overseas members and I'd like to welcome our newest Aussie members [Mr Nigel Bowen](#) (formerly of Great Britain section) and [Mr Katekunthapat Nimibutr](#) (formerly of Thailand section).

Les Clefs d'Or Australia has recently collaborated with Australian Executive Traveller an online publication with wide readership with top tier hotel and frequent flyers. We will continue to build on this relationship and others to provide exposure of the Les Clefs d'Or brand and the work that our members do.

On the events side we are extremely busy especially at State levels in organizing Tourism Expos, Familiarisations and Charitable events. Thank you to all our members who contribute to ensure the success of these events. Particularly our State Directors who put their hearts and souls into making things happen for their local members. It is great to see continued participation, however, it would be excellent to see increased attendance in supporting these events as the reality is they're conducted for the benefit of members.



On the topic of membership, *we pride ourselves in Australia on conducting a vigorous preselection and interview process*, we will never substitute quality for quantity. Interviews are overseen by our Interview Committee who conduct thorough checks on the candidates background, eligibility, knowledge as well as conduct an in person panel interview. The approximate time for an interview is generally 2.5-3.5 hours and the recommendation of the committee is then handed to the executive for final approval. I did note that some sections were interested in understanding the Australian methodology at the recent congress and I encourage any section looking to strengthen their methodology in relation to interviews to contact our interview committee chairman [Mr Josh Blake](#) (Chef Concierge – Four Seasons Sydney).

Les Clefs d'Or Australia *(continued)*

The Australian Tourism Expos have been carried out now for several years and are the brainchild of former long standing member and valued friend of Les Clefs d'Or Mr Nick Bocock. Nick has a background in creating and presenting educational materials on exceptional service and to highlight his achievements he has been asked by the international executive to assist with customer service training in the Kingdom of Bhutan. *The tourism expos are a great idea for any section wanting to provide a platform for suppliers to showcase their product to a large audience of Concierge and front desk staff* whilst bringing in some great revenue to ensure the ongoing viability of our society. It is basically in a "speed dating" (Nick would hate me to describe it like this!) style whereby each exhibitor is given 3-5 minutes to give an overview of their product, exchange details with the respective Concierge and provide materials. At the end of the time period a bell or musical notification signals a change of table and so on and so forth until the time limit (2-3 hours depending on numbers) is complete. Recently our Western Australian section with only 3 members conducted a successful Expo in the city of Perth and brought in some excellent funds for the society so it is a viable tool in any size section.

If any section is considering fundraising events, this method is excellent for both Concierge to extend their knowledge but also for your suppliers to build relationships and boost their profile within the Concierge community. If you would like any information about how we operate these please reach out and the Australian section would be more than happy to assist in sharing of format etc and expertise.

Australia will be holding it's AGM mid-year in Melbourne and as always we will extend invitations to our brothers in New Zealand to join and present on what's happening in Aotearoa.

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to the entire Turkish Section for their amazing hospitality in Istanbul! It was my first congress and let me say that the spirit of service through friendship shone brightly amongst everyone that I met. The passion and excitement that I saw amongst our colleagues really made me believe that even in the lowest and dark times, Concierge remain a positive, resilient and resourceful group of people. Let us all carry that spirit of service through friendship into the next year and I look forward to keeping you updated on all things Australia in upcoming issues.

Yours In Friendship,

Dean McWhinney
National Secretary
Les Clefs d'Or Australia

Your Les Clefs d'Or **Key Updates**

SECTION UPDATES

Les Clefs d'Or Brazil

On behalf of the Les Clefs d'Or Brésil, I am very pleased to share some updates about our section.

We had our online AGM from 2022 in the beginning of January which was very productive and we were able to organize the activities that will be made throughout the year.

In addition to that, we also started our face-to-face meetings where the first one happened at InterContinental São Paulo where we had members and aspiring members. We were able to talk about Les Clefs d'Or.



Last but not least, we had a delegation of 5 members attending the 67th International Congress In Istanbul. We had 2 members attending an International Congress for the first time, it was very inspiring and we all came back with our suitcase full of precious memories.

Warmest Regards In Friendship,
Les Clefs d'Or Brésil

Your Les Clefs d'Or **Key Updates**

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Les Clefs d'Or Denmark

Greetings from sunny Copenhagen. Spring has sprung and is starting to appear around the city, bringing not only good weather but more tourists as well. We have had a great start to 2023.

The beginning of the year started with a bang with our annual Christmas Party at Carl's Øl & Spisehus with a fantastic lottery and an array of gifts. A good time was had by all with dancing into the night. We were able to raise over 10,000 DKK for the charity of our choice that we would put to a vote at our General Assembly.



Our next big event was at Illum Luxury Department Store & Louboutin, getting an insider's tour of Illum to see all the changes they had made post corona plus the new boutiques that will have a store front to the walking street. Louboutin welcomed us with bubbles and an exclusive after-hours tour, with the evening ending at Rosso Pomodoro for snacks and refreshments.

In February we were lucky enough to add an additional key member to our section with Andreas Nielsen. We also nominated Magnus Berg Simonsen to represent Denmark for the Young Concierge Award for the UICH Congress in Istanbul.

Our Annual General Assembly quickly came and we were fortunate to be at the new Scandic Spectrum and get a tour of house before the meeting. Our Zone Director Adam Von Mentzer joined us as we elected 3 new board members, Benjamin Schwarzer, Cecelia Fonden and Magnus Berg Simonsen, and also reelecting Fredrik Lehne, and appointing a new President, as Uffe stepped down.

Also in February, Uffe and myself made a visit to the Hotel & Restaurant School to meet and speak about the role of the concierge and who Les Clefs d'Or Denmark is. We had a good response with a handful of students who were very interested in applying for concierge jobs after they graduate.

A week later, Denmark sent 5 members to represent DGN at the 67th Annual International UICH Global Congress in Istanbul! It was an incredible experience where 485 concierges and sponsors were able to finally meet after 4 years, a pandemic, and many colleagues changing careers. It was inspiring to hear talks on the Educational Day from Forbes Travel Guide, a colleague from the Four Seasons Global Hospitality Team, a Recruitment agent for Fairmont Hotels plus others. It was interesting to see that although we had concierges from all over the world, we all have the same issues post covid: hiring staff, retaining staff, building our teams, and redefining our role.



The rest of March saw two great events, the first at Fredriksborg Castle together with transport from Hamlet Tours for a half day trip, and the second was an open event to the Planetarium where we invited front office staff and hotel students from all over Copenhagen to participate. We had a great tour of the Planetarium, as well as see who Les Clefs d'or Denmark is and how to become a concierge if anyone is curious. The event had about 50 participants and ended with a delicious lunch, and we received a handful of new associate members which was very encouraging.

In regards to our new board, we had our first board meeting in March, and have decided to assign the following positions:

Benjamin Schwarzer – *Social Media*

Cecilie Fonden – *IT, New Members*

Andreas Nielsen – *Events Administrator*

Frederik Lehne – *Social Media*

Kasper Poulsen - *Treasurer*

Kevin Petersen- *General Secretary*

Magnus Berg Simonsen – *New Members*

We will continue with our monthly Board Meetings and are planning more great events for the spring and summer which will give us exposure to many new museums and local companies.

We are looking forward to a busy period like the rest of you, and we wish all other sections well for their summer season!

Until then,

In Service Through Friendship,
Michelle Exarhos Droze,
 President *Les Clefs d'Or Denmark*

Your Les Clefs d'Or **Key Updates**

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Les Clefs d'Or Hong Kong

Starting 1 March 2023, mask wearing requirements was lifted by Hong Kong Government after assessing the overall COVID-19 situation in Hong Kong. In view of this, we took this opportunity to host a general meeting & dinner Mask-Free to welcome our members & business partners with smiling faces @ The Kimberley Hotel TST on 8 March 2023



From 28th to 29th March, a familiarization tour of Macau for Hong Kong Chapter was arranged by the Macau Government Tourism Office, to allow update the Hong Kong members on the Macao tourist spots and new developments. A great way to re-connect in friendship between the Macau & Hong Kong's members



Your Les Clefs d'Or **Key Updates**

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Les Clefs d'Or Japan

Les Clefs d'Or Japan 25th Anniversary

It was a moment when Japan was accepted as the 33rd chapter of UICH on 18 November 1997 at the international congress in Budapest. I still vividly remember it. 25 years has passed and we had a wonderful 25th anniversary party on 15th November 2022 at Grand Hyatt Tokyo.

It started with greetings by president Mayako Sumiyoshi, expressed her joy of gathering with all members after two and a half years due to COVID 19 and made sure that we have to strive to improve ourselves with the same purpose. We thanked to Mr. Cooper, General Manager at Grand Hyatt Tokyo for the warm

welcome speech, then 12 former members are introduced by the president. Also we would like to thank Ms. Helena Phua, Executive Vice President, Asia Pacific of The New York Times Company, she has been supporting us for long time and she toasted for us. Enjoyable chatting with each other and delicious buffet was started after the toast and an amazing 25th anniversary cake by the team of pâtissier at Grand Hyatt Tokyo impressed us very much.

In the speech given by Ms. Rikako Ikeda, one of the founder members, we were told that our logo with the motif of Mt. Fuji, the highest mountain in Japan, represents our wish at the time of establishment that "Les Clefs d'Or Japan offers the highest level of hospitality in Japan". Also, an important sentence from LE HALL was introduced, "Human being considers the true meaning of hospitality to be the emotional touch given by others, beautiful smile, sincerity, and thoughtfulness. The true service and philosophy of concierge will be passed on forever, even as we introduce and adapt to many wonderful technological innovations. Then, Mr. Araya of Gconcept LTD. and Mr. Tanahashi of Suntory Spirits Ltd. delivered congratulatory speeches on behalf of our affiliated companies.



Also, the six new members made speeches introducing themselves and their aspirations for the future. We are confident that they will be a breath of fresh air and bring even more vitality to future of Les Clefs d'Or. Toward the end of event, a letter and the video message from international members were shown, and the participants were moved by the warm words from all over the world.

As conclusion, Ms. Aiko Imaizumi, Vice President expressed her gratitude to all those who have supported Les Clefs d'Or Japan from its birth to today. It was a moment that reaffirmed for us that no matter how difficult the situation, we concierges never lose our passion for our profession and the bonds of friendship.

Les Clefs d'Or Japan & Japan Concierge Association Joint Seminar 2023



On January 23, Monday the annual joint seminar of the Japan Concierge Association and Les Clefs d'Or Japan was held at The Conrad Tokyo. It was great to see 100 members to meet and gather in almost after 3 years at the seminar. This year's theme was focused on the "Power of Listening," We welcomed 3 guest speakers to talk about this topic. The seminar was divided into 2 parts.

The first half of the seminar featured a prominent guest speaker, Ms. Sawako Agawa, the author of the book "Power of Listening" with Ms. Kay Abe, Les Clefs d'Or International honorary member who did a panel discussion.

In the second half, Les Clefs d'Or members from overseas. Ms. Sheron Empey, VIP & Concierge Associate of Fairmont Pacific Rim, Canada, and Mr. Thomas Munko, Chief Concierge of The Ritz-Carlton, Berlin Germany joined the seminar on-line and spoke about their current situation in their respective countries with great tips and useful techniques on how to be an active listener.

The 3-hour seminar was a time to rediscover and to learn about a very important element of our work. When it is busy, we tend to forget the simple things, but this seminar reminded us of the importance of going back to the basics. It was nice to gather again to be able to see each other and to share the experience.

Les Clefs d'Or Japan New President and new committee

On March 22, 2023, Les Clefs d'Or Japan had an election and Aiko Imaizumi, Chief Concierge of Grand Hyatt Tokyo is elected as the President of Les Clefs d'Or Japan from April 2023 for two years. Past President, Mayako Sumiyoshi, Chief Concierge of Palace Hotel Tokyo is appointed as a Zone Director of South East Asia & Oceania, UICH Les Clefs d'Or.

Les Clefs d'Or Japan will host Annual General Meeting on April 19 and the new committee will then be officially activated.



Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

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Les Clefs d'Or Philippines

Annual General Meeting 2022

After 3 years of “isolation,” since the global pandemic happened, Les Clefs d'Or Philippines is back in action! Our Annual General Meeting 2022 finally happened at the Widus Hotel and Casino, Clark, Pampanga on October 24-25, 2022.



An educational forum was held at the Mabalacat City College and attended by hospitality students. The election of the new Executive Committee also took place during the meeting. Various suppliers and industry partners were also presented. A Charity dinner for the Andy Pongco Day of Service was also held after the meeting. Proceeds were donated to the Aeta Community in Nabuclod,

Floridablanca, Pampanga.

Les Clefs d'Or Philippines Executive Committee (2022-2023)

President: Mr. Jerome Uy - Solaire Resort and Casino

Vice President: Mr. Robert Andrew Porter – Edsa Shangri-La Manila

Secretary General: Mr. Bryan Beley – Solaire Resort and Casino

Assistant Secretary General: Mr. Roger Manuel – Crimson Resort and Spa Boracay

Treasurer: Mr. Paulo Melendres – Okada Manila

Assistant Treasurer: Mr. Alexander Quilatan – Holiday Inn and Suites Manila

Public Relations Head: Ms. Vanessa Socion - Okada Manila

Assistant Public Relations Head: Ms. Pia Vanessa Amado – Bai Hotel Cebu

Les Clefs d'Or Philippines National Honorary Members

Mr. Jobelle Ramos

Mr. Pops Del Rosario

Mr. August Samala

Newly Pinned Members (Active)

Mr. Paulo Melendres – Okada Manila



Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

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Les Clefs d'Or Malaysia



Les Clefs d'Or Malaysia cordially invites you to the upcoming **12th UICH Asian Congress** in Langkawi, Malaysia from the 10th to 13th September 2023!

For more details and to register please visit our website at www.clefsdormalaysia.org

See you there!

Les Clefs d'Or Qatar

On behalf of Les Clefs d'Or Qatar, we are pleased to share the proud moment during the 67th UICH International Congress in Istanbul when **Mr. Randy Santos** from Fairmont Doha got elected as UICH President and this made a History for Les Clefs d'Or Qatar.

During this Holy month of Ramadan from 22nd of March till 20th of April (estimated), our members of Les Clefs d'Or Qatar, Qatar Concierge Society volunteers with our local CSR Committee created a simple Iftar Food Giving for those fasting & workers who are working during the Day Time while fasting. The Event was made to let the workers feels that they are appreciated and we are thankful for their hard work. They distributed 100's of bags of Iftar Meal in 2 different Mosque which workers comes for praying. The Les Clef d'Or Qatar members and Qatar Concierge Society with the Section President Mr. Andrew Ferrer are proud to contribute their efforts and volunteer their time to share this successful activity and put smiles on those hard workers. This activity allows the members to keep in contact and to collaborate with others on CSR activities in the future.



Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

Les Clefs d'Or Portugal

Many greetings from sunny Portugal!

2023 has come and with many changes to our section. After some challenging months during and after the pandemic, in January 2023, we decided to bring back the events and social activities.

There were so many changes, in many ways (a lot of our friends and colleagues decided to retire or to change careers) which implied that we have to get to know all the new hotels, our newly joined members some new concierges who had just begun their hospitality careers.

In the last 3 months, we have been visiting and contacting some of Lisbon's hotels to introduce ourselves and to be at their service for any assistance they need: the feedback has been amazing and we could not be happier.

We also decided to have at least one event per month: we have gatherings of different concierges from many different hotels and organized some fun and interactive activities:



In January we had a tour of a new museum in town: Quake – where we had all gained the knowledge needed to explain to our guests the importance of the 1755's earthquake in our city.

Also in January, we organized a food tour, in a tuk tuk, visiting 5 incredible restaurants in the city;

In February we surprised our associates with a private fado show – after an amazing walking tour with an official tourist guide.

In March we had two tours focusing in the high-end shopping areas where we learned so much about luxury and fashion! This April we will have two incredible sailing tours in our beautiful Tagus River.

And in summer, we have so many things to come! Surf lessons, golf for starters and wine tastings!

Porto and Algarve are also growing in terms of tourism and we won't let them out of the plan: we are already planning some activities in their districts to make the connections stronger and better!

But there is more good news to share! Our president, Luis Miguel Assenção, was recently elected during the 67th International UICH Congress in Istanbul, Turkey, as the Zone Director of Mediterranean– and we could not be more excited for him! It will be challenging but we are sure that all the hard work invested will be worth it!

We look forward to welcoming you to our beautiful country!



Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

Les Clefs d'Or Singapore

We are pleased to introduce to you our newly elected Executive Committee members for 2022/2024



President
Syed Musaddiq
(Raffles Hotel Singapore)



Vice President
Faele Rifaeh
(Conrad Centennial Singapore)



Honorary Secretary
Deborah De Costa
(Four Seasons Singapore)



Asst. Honorary Secretary
Lynn Razak
(Intercontinental Singapore)



Honorary Treasurer
Mohd Hafiz Samat
(Raffles Hotel Singapore)



Asst. Honorary Treasurer
Muhd Aqid
(Sofitel Singapore City Centre)



Public Relations & Int'l Delegates
Muhd Syahir
(Parkroyal Collections
Pickering Singapore)



Asst. Public Relations
Bernard Theseira
(Oasia Resort, Sentosa)



Executive Committee
Azman Mansor
(Parkroyal Collections
Marina Bay)



Executive Committee
Muhammad Ariffin
(Mandarin Oriental)



Executive Committee
Mazelan Mohd Ali
(Orchard Hotel Singapore)



On the 21st March 2023, Les Clefs d'Or Singapore printed and published our very own 1st Edition Singapore Map in collaboration with Concierge Map. The Maps were distributed to Les Clefs d'Or Singapore Members to be given out to the respective Hotel Guests.

In addition, Les Clefs d'Or Singapore is doing our part in moving towards sustainability by introducing digital maps for members that can be accessed on smartphones and other mobile devices via the QR Code.



On 02nd April 2023, Concierge Association of Vietnam (Affiliated to Les Clefs d'Or Singapore) hosted their Annual General Meeting in Melia Hanoi. This marks the first time that Hanoi played host to this prominent event. Attended by Executive Members of Les Clefs d'Or Singapore, Hotel General Managers, Associate Members, and various other members, this event managed highlight the Society to the capital of Vietnam in hopes to increase the awareness of Les Clefs d'Or

Your Les Clefs d'Or Key Updates

Les Clefs d'Or USA

Dear friends,

It was truly a delight and pleasure to reunite with so many of you in Istanbul. We send our sincere gratitude and congratulations to President Adnan Oner and his entire team.



The USA is honored to announce that, during the congress in Istanbul, Mr. Robert Marks (Chef Concierge, Omni San Diego) was elected to 3rd Vice President. Please join us in congratulating and supporting him in his upcoming endeavors on the Executive Committee. We are sure he will contribute much to UICH.



Thank you to our members who participated in the CSR efforts to support the earthquake victims in Turkey. Under the leadership of Mildred Schneidman Soto and Angelica Miozza, the USA contributed suitcases full of clothing to the relief efforts. Members who attended the Istanbul congress also brought blankets, clothing and toys for distribution to those displaced by the disaster.

Currently, the USA Board of Directors is working diligently to produce the North American congress to be held in Las Vegas May 30th through June 2nd. With nearly 200 members expected from throughout the United States and Canada, the host committees, led by Ms. Jeanne Mills (Chef Concierge, Aria) are sure to make this congress memorable. The theme of the congress is "Doubling Down on Service," and the focus of the educational component will be the emotional well-being of our members. Speakers will include experts from the fields of neuroscience, psychology, and education.



In the USA, we process membership applications on a quarterly basis. Our March batch of candidates are now complete, and we are pleased to welcome the newest members of our family: **Andres Meneses** (JW Marriott Marquis Miami), **Douglas Boorman** (Green Valley Ranch Resort & Spa), **Matthew McAuliffe** (Conrad Hotel Nashville), **Karina Day** (Wynn Las Vegas), **Julia Ambler** (Post Oak Hotel at Uptown Houston), and **Randy Boudreaux** (Four Seasons New Orleans).

This year, the USA celebrates its 45th anniversary as a member section, and two of our original members are still active today. Our founding member, Mr. Thomas Wolfe (who needs no introduction) is still practicing his concierge craft at the Fairmont San Francisco! And, though no longer a concierge, Ms. Holly Stiel continues educating people about customer service as a public speaker and consultant.

We look forward to seeing everyone at the North American congress and next year in Bali!

In Friendship,

Leigh Anne Dolecki

President, Les Clefs d'Or USA

Your Les Clefs d'Or **Key Updates**

Denis TC O'Brien – a tribute by Robert Watson

As shared during the 67th UICH International Congress in Istanbul, 2023

I first met Denis in 1987, he was the Head Concierge at the Central Hotel Dublin, the GB section every year was invited for a Golfing weekend in Ireland, during this weekend of Golf, I was paired with Denis to make the Four Ball team and the rest is History. From that weekend onwards we stayed in contact both professionally and personally.

From 1991 we started to see each other more often at Clefs d'Or Board of Directors meetings, Denis eventually taking over as President of LCD Ireland.

In Biarritz 2003, Denis was appointed First International Vice-President, Andy Pongco was promoted to Second VP, I was elected as Third VP, we were the new generation on the board, from then on Denis called us "The Power of Three".

At the Manila Congress in 2005, Denis was elected International President of UICH. During his mandate as President, he was able to achieve most of the items on his agenda, very sadly on his last year as President, our dearly beloved Andy was taken from us far too early. To honour Andy, Denis created the "Andy Pongco Award" eventually to become: Les Clefs d'Or Young Leader Award, the first competition was in Vienna in 2007. We had 6 nominees then and has grown in leaps and bounds. Denis felt this was the best way to remember Andy, as he was a pioneer in mentoring young Concierges both in his beloved Philippines and, eventually, Dubai.

I always remember Denis' sense of humour. On every Congress during his mandate as President, he spread the word amongst all first time congress attendees that they will be asked to sing a song at the General Assembly, his message was to rehearse and not too be shy or nervous.

Needless to say, there was no competition, and, of course all the youngsters were worried about it throughout the Congress. On the personal side of our friendship, Denis became one Paula's and mine closest friends, to the extent our son Brooks, called him Uncle Denis! We travelled the world, both for Clefs d'Or and Vacation, we always managed to discuss and try to sort issues the organization may have had at the time.

I am so very happy and I know Denis is honoured, this year's award is named after him.

Les Clefs d'Or has lost an Icon and a Leader, my family and I have lost a dear Friend!!

Thank you Denis, for your everlasting dedication, unforgettable spirit and bravery, our Dear International President of Clefs d'Or and Proud Son of Ireland!!! **Long Live Les Clefs d'Or!**

