

Lux Q&A: Hip Hotelier Gregory Peck

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Hip young hotelier Gregory Peck (right) is causing a stir on the New York scene with his new boutique property, the Cooper Square Hotel. The Carlos Zapata-designed 21-story white glass tower, which embodies Peck's concept of beautifully-rendered "Downtown Luxury," is slated to open at the end of the month. The Cooper Square features an urban oasis of a garden, multistory bar, library and screening room; Chanel recently threw a party there for Keira Knightley's new movie *The Duchess*.

Peck, 34, (no relation to the actor) is also the founder of the Crescent Hotel Group which owns the Crescent Hotel in Beverly Hills and the Crescent San Francisco, which is currently under construction on Union Square and will open next year. He spoke to Luxist about his unique vision and where he thinks the hotel business is headed:

Why are your hotels better than the competition's?



Well, first of all we don't simply try to be better than other hotels. We have a strong point of view on the type of experience we want to provide our guest and that varies from property to property, but always with the goal of trying to entice the senses while insisting on highly personalized service and always stressing having people feel a deep sense of comfort. And we want people to enjoy themselves; that sounds obvious but I think some hotels put their image and form ahead of simply creating a culture within the hotel that encourages people to enjoy

their experience in a casual sort of way.

We accomplish all of this really the old fashioned way - hard work. It starts with intense planning up front. We spend a lot of time developing a unique concept and a narrative for what we want the hotel to be and then we execute it, painstakingly focusing on ever detail of the process. We think of each project differently, trying to understand its market, the environment, the people who will stay there and the experience we want to create.

Gallery: [Cooper Square Hotel](#)



What makes your projects stand out in particular?

Hopefully a few things - one is we want people to simply recognize that we operate at a high level, that the design is beautiful, the service is very personalized and the entire experience works. We want people to understand that we are passionate hoteliers. Otherwise, I think our overall personality should come out in the properties. That's really about there being a sense that we are down to earth, and we want ourselves and we want our guests to have fun, and we want everyone to feel pampered by people who are more life friends than servants.

Where do you think the hotel business is headed?

I think you are going to see more people like us doing innovative projects. People in this country in particular are sophisticated enough that they are demanding more special hotel experiences than what is offered at the flag properties. There will always be people that seek the comfortable in what they are familiar with at the flag properties but there is a whole segment of culture that wants something that is more emotional, something more enjoyable. Currently, I think that only 3% of the hotel rooms in this country are considered independent or boutique, implying that there is a huge market to tap into. More and more, you will see people like us pushing to innovate in the hotel industry.

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