

Be My Guest

STORY EMMA HARLEY

From proprietor of a dusty Texas oil town hotel to the world's premier statesman of international hospitality, Conrad Hilton rewrote the limits of the American Dream, establishing the world's leading hotel corporation, the Hilton Hotel.

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Conrad N. Hilton, President
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"LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION." Today, Hilton is the flagship brand of Hilton Hotels Corporation and one of the most recognised names in the global lodging industry.

A certain distinction is connected to particular brands, and this is particularly true in reference to the Hilton.

Born in San Antonio, New Mexico Territory, Conrad Hilton developed his now famous entrepreneurial skills as a young boy, helping his father build up an inn. He entered the hotel business with the purchase of the 40 room Mobley Hotel in , in 1919, moving on to buy hotels throughout Texas, founding the first so-named Hilton Hotel in 1925 in Dallas, Texas.

Hotel by hotel, Hilton grew into the country's first coast-to-coast hotel chain, and the Hilton Hotels Corporation was formed in 1946, with other prestigious inns added to the Hilton portfolio, including the Sir Francis Drake in San Francisco, New York's Waldorf-Astoria, and the Palmer House in Chicago. In 1954, Hilton became the owner of the chain, making it the largest hospitality company in the world.

During the post-war period, the 1950s and 1960s, Hilton Hotels' worldwide expansion facilitated both American tourism and overseas business by United States corporations, at the same time promoting a certain worldwide standard for hotel accommodation.

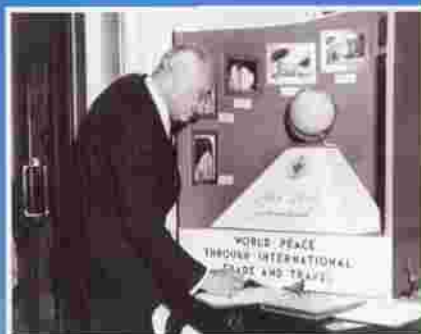
The prestigious hotel chain also set the scene for many historic moments over the years. Chicago's Conrad Hilton Hotel was the scene of the 1968 Democratic Convention riots that occurred across the street in Grant Park. The hotel's doors were locked for the first time in its history, as street level windows gave way under the weight of hundreds of protesters.

John Lennon and Yoko Ono held their first 'Bed-In for Peace' in March 1969 at the Amsterdam Hilton in Room 702, which has since become a popular tourist destination. A Hilton bartender even created the world's first Pina Colada.

Though he ran a successful and profitable business, Conrad Hilton exhibited a genuine feeling of concern and responsibility toward the less fortunate. This is reflected beautifully in his Last Will and Testament wherein he creates a legacy directing that his wealth be eternally reinvested to alleviate human suffering throughout the world.

In his 1957 autobiography, *Be My Guest*, Conrad explains how this philanthropic side was with him from an early age. "I made buying trips with father which were an experience in themselves. Father had a method of spreading goodwill, a habit of appropriating bits of verse or words of wisdom that appealed to him, having them printed on brightly coloured cards with his name on the bottom and leaving a trail of them in his wake as he made his rounds of the territory. He would go 15 or 20 miles out of his way to present his latest card to an old Mexican who spoke no English, or to an Indian scout who couldn't read."

Over the years the company grew and grew, and Conrad Hilton became one of the world's wealthiest men. Upon his death in 1979, he left the bulk of his estate to his philanthropic organisation, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. He also endowed the Conrad N. Hilton College of Hotel and Restaurant Management



ABOVE: Artist's impression of the new Hilton Surfers Paradise Hotel and Residence Tower.
INSET: Conrad Hilton promoted world peace through travel and tourism.

at the University of Houston. Hilton's son Barron followed him as head of the company, which by the year 2000 had nearly 500 hotels around the world.

Conrad Hilton was recognised worldwide for his leadership and vision, using extraordinary instinct, enthusiasm and business acumen to create the world's largest and most profitable international hotel chain.

This success and business expertise continued to flourish over the years, with Hilton pioneering the concept of airport hotels and computerised hotel reservations, and reuniting Hilton Hotels Corporation and Hilton International.

In 1974, Hilton launched in Australia with Melbourne's Hilton on the Park, followed promptly in 1975 with the Hilton Sydney. Vice President of Operations Australasia for Hilton Hotels, Ashley Spencer says Hilton's progress in Australia has been impressive and predicts a very active future.

"We are hungry for new opportunities across all of our hotel brands including Double Tree by Hilton and Hampton by Hilton and I hope that by the end of 2009, we will have doubled in size," Spencer says.

"We also have a number of projects currently underway including the highly anticipated Hilton Surfers Paradise Hotel and Residences, a \$700 million development which will comprise dual beachside towers on the prized site where one of the Gold Coast's best known landmarks, the Dolphin Arcade, once stood."

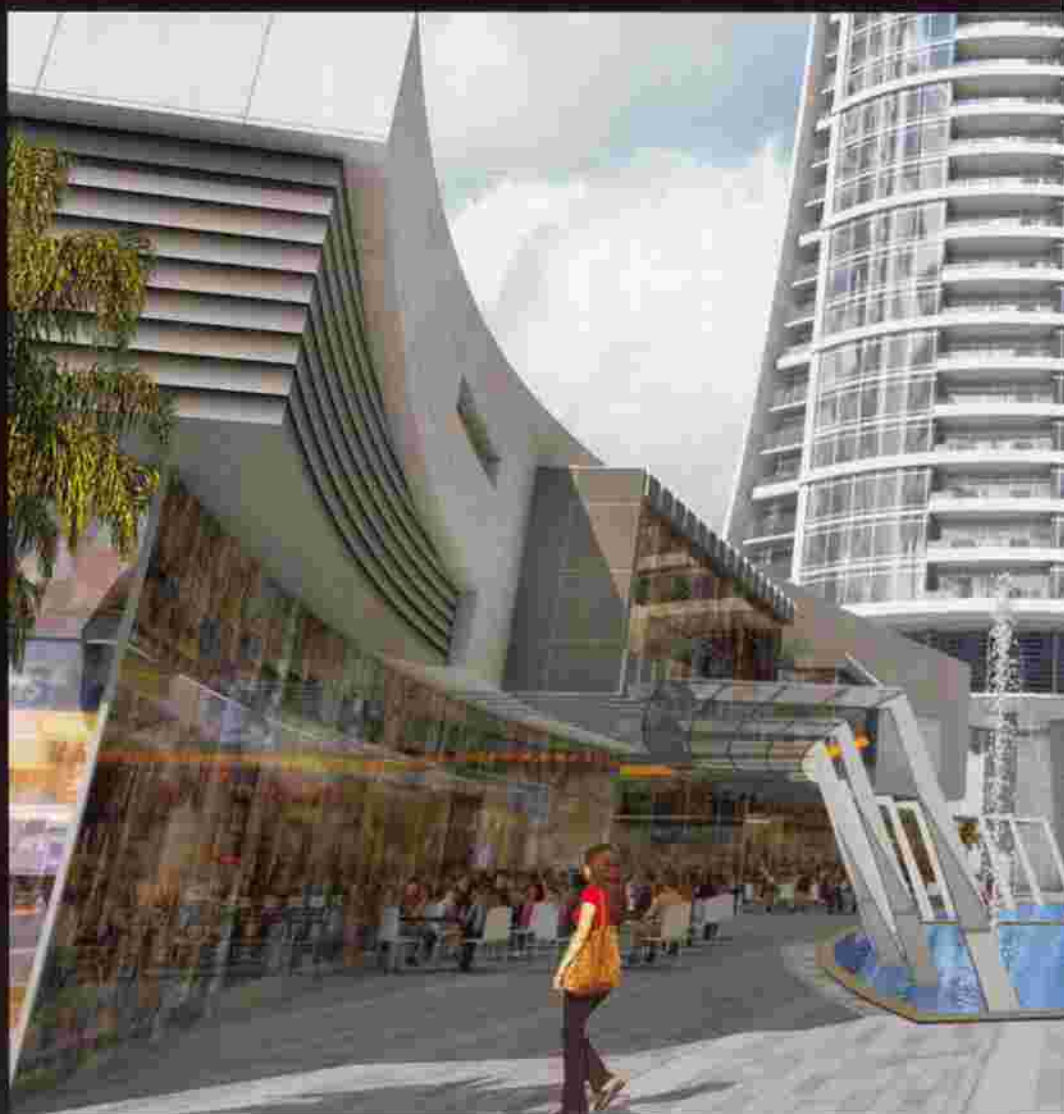
Certainly an extraordinary ascent to the heights of hotel fame. This is made even more evident in a 2007 poll of Asia Pacific business travellers, which named Hilton the 'Number one Asia Pacific Hotel Brand' and 'Asia Pacific's Leading Hotel Choice' ahead of 50 of the world's leading hotel groups in the annual 2007 BDRG Asia Pacific Hotel Business Guest Survey. In Australia, Hilton was ranked in top place for the third year in a row.

Hilton Hotels' President Asia Pacific, Koos Klein says this is an extraordinary result for the Hilton brand as it reflects what the most critical customer base, the frequent business traveller, is thinking. "It also shows we are continuing to deliver against the key attributes valued in a hotel stay such as comfortable rooms, friendly service, quality food and beverage offerings and value for price paid," he says.

"I am especially delighted with our performance in Australia where Hilton has retained the highest brand ranking in each of the last three years, despite strong international competition. It indicates that the millions of dollars of infrastructure investment injected into our Australian portfolio over the past four years as well as our drive for service excellence has kept us relevant to our core market."

Today, the Hilton brand operates over 2900 hotels worldwide, with over 500,000 rooms and 100,000 team members in 76 countries. Not a bad development for a company that started with one small Texas hotel and a passionate young Hilton. Not bad at all!

FROM TOP: Hilton's first international hotel in the Caribbean | Artist's impression of the Surfer's Hilton Arcade.





HILTON SURFERS PARADISE HOTEL AND RESIDENCES

One of the newest inclusions to the distinguished Hilton family is the remarkable Hilton Surfers Paradise Hotel and Residences. Housing over 170 luxury hotel rooms and 400 premier apartments, this \$700 million development will be the first Hilton Hotel on the Gold Coast and the third Hilton in Queensland.

Due for completion in 2010, this luxury establishment will comprise two impressive towers, the 32-level Boulevard Tower and the 58-level Orchid Tower, which will capture sweeping views of the coastline, ocean, hinterland and skyline.

Perfectly positioned to take advantage of everything the Gold Coast has to offer, the strikingly modern Hilton Hotel and Residences is a unique development in that it is not only the first five-star hotel to be built on the Gold Coast in nearly a decade, but it will also be the largest in Australia to offer exclusive hotel residences.

Vice President of Operations for Hilton Hotels Australasia Ashley Spencer says the Hilton Surfers Paradise Hotel and Residences allows people who live in the residences to feel as if they are living in a five-star hotel with all the services that brings. "Essentially residents will be living in their own home and have access to hotel luxuries like room service, valet parking, an executive lounge and housekeeping," he says.

"There is a demand for this type of living; it creates a level of convenience rarely seen in residential developments. The hotel component speaks for itself – with tourism booming on the Gold Coast, Hilton wanted to be a part of such a dynamic location."

This concept of hotel residences is part of the latest real estate trend in five-star apartment living to take the world by storm and major global cities from London to Berlin, Las Vegas to New York and now Australia are taking hold of this new way of luxury living.

And luxury living it is indeed. The Hilton Surfers Paradise will provide a range of world-class services for residents and visitors, including a 24-hour, seven-day concierge, valet parking, room service, housekeeping, a luxury day spa and Hilton specialty restaurants.

The hotel will also offer a VIP lounge, cinema, gymnasium, indoor and outdoor pools and barbecue and entertainment areas. A major retail emporium featuring international retailers and fine dining restaurants will form the development's ground-level hub, together with executive office suites. It truly is red carpet lifestyle in the heart of Surfers Paradise.