

True to Tradition

Vincent Pirot, regional vice president and general manager of the Millennium Biltmore, on preserving and promoting a historic hotel.



Global Traveler: *How have the history and architecture of the property influenced the development of the Millennium Biltmore?*

Vincent Pirot: Simply put, they just don't make hotels like this anymore. It was built 85 years ago, in 1923, and it is still a landmark with a rich history and family roots. We get a lot of visitors who remark about their grandparents' stays during the heyday of downtown L.A.; coming here has become a family tradition.

Some of our employees have been here for many years — in fact, one has worked here for 48 years and can recall details from 1960, when the hotel served as JFK's campaign headquarters during the Democratic National Convention. The stories are endless.

GT: *What makes the Millennium Biltmore a desirable hotel for business travelers?*

VP: All the features we offer make

the property a great option for business travelers. We have a business center open 24/7 and high-speed Internet in all the guestrooms. We are located near the train stations and all the major downtown businesses. We have top-notch restaurants featuring Japanese and Italian-American cuisine. And, of course, I cannot forget to mention our well-known Gallery Bar. We are dedicated to serving the business traveler, the leisure traveler and local businesspeople. The Millennium Biltmore is a wonderful property and our location is excellent, especially with the large-scale revitalization in downtown Los Angeles.

GT: *What changes are underway?*

VP: All Millennium hotels have been upgraded with new bedding, which has been receiving rave reviews from our guests. In a few months we will have completed upgrading to flat-panel TVs in all of the guest rooms. We really try to keep ourselves aligned with the needs of our guests, basing our changes on their suggestions and feedback.

GT: *Tell us about your career in the hospitality industry.*

VP: I am a bit historic myself — well, maybe not quite as historic as the hotel. I got started in the business at the Algonquin in New York and spent some time at the Vista Hotel in the World Trade Center. I have bounced between California and New York my whole career. I was with the Millennium Broadway and opened the Soho Grand. I came back to L.A. to work with the Mondrian and Kor Group, and then landed at the Biltmore. I love what I do — whether opening a new hotel or revamping a historic property, it is all exciting.