

HOTEL

A S I A P A C I F I C

For hospitality professionals



**Official
Publication**

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Why I sued Starwood



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- **Hilton launches internet check-in**
- **How one resort is saving mega bucks**
- **Straight from the Shark’s mouth**

Credit where it's due ...

It's crucial to recognise staff for their wine knowledge, says **Steven Hicks**, **InterContinental Hotels Group's** regional VP for Southeast Asia

□ By **Fred Tibbitts**

IT'S all about branding, isn't it? Your wines by the glass programme is one of many sophisticated means of positively reinforcing the brand, right?

InterContinental guests are international business travellers who appreciate the finer things in life. They enjoy the local flavours and differences within each country, yet have a very clear set of values and attitudes that set them apart.

The brand understands and anticipates the needs and desires of its customers and ensures their needs are continuously met.

Today's 4- and 5-star guests are very knowledgeable about wine, and they expect the servers to also know about wines. Is this your experience?

Today's customers are well-travelled and cultured. They demand respect, but not of the ostentatious kind.

Although they appreciate the servers recommending wines to complement their meals, they are still aware of their own individual preferences.

Our new wine programme will offer our customers a far better selection of wines by the glass, with lots of exceptional values from New Zealand, Australia and California that our guests will want described to allow them to make informed decisions.

With the many advances in wine preservation, it's no longer a problem to offer a broader selection of wines by the glass from the major producing areas of the world, but just how many wines by the glass does the typical InterContinental, Crowne Plaza and Holiday Inn guest expect to be available? If requested, would you open any bottle on the list to satisfy a guest?

We are working with our wine partners to support us with the most sophisticated wine-preservation systems for every hotel.

The *Le Verre de Vin* enables us to accommodate our guests' tastes with a wide selection at the right price point. We are now able to offer a selection of premium wines to our guests without compromising on quality.

Do your guests in Asia Pacific seem to be gravitating to new-world wines and away from old-world choices, or does it vary by country?



This varies from market to market, based on several factors, including travel exposure of each demographic group within a market, wine-importation taxes in each country and currency exchange, just to name a few.

The trend is towards new-world wines, but our customers often expect superior offerings, particularly the great wines of Burgundy and Bordeaux.

You are launching a new wines-by-the-glass programme in Asia to more consistently offer your guests a better selection of popular wines. What kind of upgraded training and wine preservation are you including to ensure that the greater selection of wines is always served fresh and that the servers become more knowledgeable, instead of confused?

Selecting to work with the right partner is vital in implementing any successful programme, and we will work closely with our wine partners to provide our brand-enhanced training tailored to each country, yet addressing the new-edge, common denominators for Asia.

Do you believe in sales contests among servers to increase wine sales? If so, what incentives work best and does it vary by country?

Sales incentives are a good approach, including on-the-job wine education, with achievement certificates for recognition each step of the way.

There is also lots of management recognition for those who take wine education seriously, and take responsibility for both the food and the beverage offerings. □

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