

## Independent Hotel Stands Among Award Winners

*Hong Kong, China – June 17, 2009* – At the 5<sup>th</sup> Hospitality Design International Forum in Beijing held last week, the list of 2009 top ten luxury hotels in China by HOTELS CHINA was revealed. The usual suspects of international brands made their common appearance with recognition going to various properties of the Park Hyatt, Ritz-Carlton, Shangri-la and other well-known hotel chains. Meanwhile, one newcomer, the only independent hotel, also made the list. And a seasoned industry veteran looked on in quiet satisfaction.



Richard Agon and Darryl Agon in their Hong Kong office

The independent hotel was the 391 room, Legendale Hotel Beijing that newly opened in 2008 on Jin Bao Street in Beijing in the heart of the Wangfujing district with a GFA of over 143,000 square metres. And the veteran was Richard Agon, Chairman of Agon Hotels and Resorts Ltd. who has been in the industry since the 1960's. He followed a family tradition that first began in Cuba by his grandfather in the early 1900's, and then later with his uncle in Hong Kong with the opening of the President Hotel (the former Hyatt Regency) in 1963.

AH&R provided hotel technical services and pre-opening consulting advice for the hotel for a three year period before its opening leading up to the Olympics where the property hosted heads of state and senior officials.

Besides Richard Agon, AH&R's team of industry professionals that worked on the Legendale project includes his son, Darryl Agon, who has been with AH&R for 8 years and is confidently carrying on the family tradition into its fourth generation.

The project team working with AH&R also included such groups as Aedas as architects, LRF as interior designers, Meinhardt as engineers, and Levett & Bailey (now Rider Levett Bucknall).



Darryl Agon on the Legendale construction site in 2008

Richard Agon's pride for the finished property comes from various sources. "It is great to see that we helped the owner realize his dreams to make such a profound statement in the heart of Beijing and China with such a unique property. The statement is so unique, it didn't fit into any typical 'brand' specifications. Yet our collective team managed this accomplishment to the same international standards."

Darryl Agon adds "The back-of-house is something most people don't see, but it is something we are also proud of in terms of what we could do with the limited and unusually laid-out spaces."

Darryl Agon also points out how the Legendale shows AH&R's distinction as a company saying "The whole project shows how we can be flexible to meet the owner's requests. We don't say 'No you can't do this or that'. We will give our comments, but in the end, we recognize the owner's investment is the owner's investment, not ours. This is part of our philosophy to be flexible and be owner-friendly. We position AH&R as an alternative to more traditional companies by offering owners a chance to make their dreams happen the way they want them to, with professional guidance along the way."

When asked about what's next for AH&R, Richard Agon notes, that besides the regular ongoing consulting and hotel management works, a AH&R team being led by Darryl is currently working on developing a mountain resort in Yunnan province. "It is a young person's world. They are more apt for those high altitude, literally dizzying assignments" Richard Agon jests. What's also next, is no doubt the fourth generation of the Agon name in the hotel industry, and likely more independent hotels winning more awards.

**HOTELS CHINA AWARD**

**2009 LUXURY HOTEL TOP 10**

- St. Regis Shanghai
- Portman Ritz-Carlton Shanghai
- Park Hyatt Shanghai
- Park Hyatt Beijing
- Legendale Hotel Beijing
- Ritz-Carlton Beijing
- Conrad Hong Kong
- Mandarin Oriental Hong Kong
- China World Hotel Beijing
- Shangri-la Hotel Beijing