

Carmen Cruz Montes

Born and raised in Barcelona, Spain, Carmen Cruz is a successful and established international business leader with over 25 years of experience in the hospitality industry.

She began her career at luxury, 5 star, 5 Diamond boutique hotels in Europe. Her strong business sense and unique leadership style, driven by a distinctive passion and creative approach, soon gained her recognition as a leader and by age 27 she had become one of the youngest boutique hotels' Sr. executives in Barcelona.

Her passion and drive to become the best in her field, paired with a strong sense of purpose to inspire and impact people's lives, made her seek further studies abroad. Holding a Bachelor's degree in Hotel Management, Carmen pursued additional business and revenue management studies at UC Berkeley and Cornell University.

Following her move to the Bay Area, she joined Hilton Hotels as a Front Office Manager at the Hilton San Francisco where she broke records on service scores and employee satisfaction. She was nominated twice as a top performer for the company and later would become Director of Front Office Operations. During her 12 years tenure with the company, she managed hotels up to 2000 rooms, oversaw multiple renovations, a hotel opening from groundbreaking to grand opening and held key sr. executive positions in San Diego, LA and Colorado, where she won the property of the year award and increased the property ranking from #113 to #42 out of the 285 properties within the Americas.

Returning to her boutique roots and the Bay Area in 2014 as a GM, Carmen led the multimillion dollar renovation, transition, reposition and rebranding of the upscale lifestyle boutique Hotel Zephyr. She successfully achieved a 12% rate growth and increased the hotel's TA ranking from #121 to #36 within 90 days, positioning the property within the top 15% tier in San Francisco. She was awarded recognition as "GMs to watch in 2015" by Hotel Management.

By early 2016, Carmen became the GM at the luxury independent Casa Madrona Hotel & Spa. Through her strong industry knowledge and successful innovative business strategists, she repositioned the property within the local and international luxury market and created a strong brand identity while successfully leading a multimillion dollar renovation. She achieved 11% and 13% REVPAR growth in 2017/2018 while the SF market's average was experiencing negative growth and, although starting to recuperate by 2018, never surpassed a 5%. A rate growth of 17% (over \$60) revenue

growth of 40% and NOI growth of 20% were some of the remarkable financial performances achieved by her leadership.

In January 2019, her latest creation, the " Casa Wellness Experience" pioneered the introduction of "smart beds" into the hotel industry. This innovative immersive concept touched all aspects of wellness, from sleep to fitness, holistic and nutrition, merging intentional and pioneering biometrics and AI technology with a strong purpose for enhancing the human experience.

This innovative program generated an increase in ADR of \$193, garnered tremendous national press coverage and was awarded with the 2019 HealthyTravel Awards as "Healthiest Amenities" by Shape magazine, bringing the property to the forefront of the tech and wellness worlds.

As part of her continued commitment to the growth and evolution of Leadership and her passion for the role that women play in shaping its future, Carmen was a speaker at the "2018 4th Annual Women in Leadership" event that took place in San Francisco. Today, she continues her passion and work on this area through her own company, "Lead by Passion", and working closely with several organizations; writing, teaching and speaking about Evolutionary Leadership and the new paradigm that is upon us.