



Hyatt Regency Saipan: Caring for people

Toward the next 40 years of quality hotel service

in the CNMI

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

For the past 41 years, Hyatt Regency Saipan has provided nothing but top-of-the-line service to its guests and patrons, and a care that has been lovingly extended not just to its own staff, but also to the entire CNMI community.

From weddings to baptisms, brunches at Kili Café & Terrace to fine dining at Giovanni's, or simply just spending a night and lounging by the pool, everyone on island has their own Hyatt story to share.

For Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Nick Nishikawa, his story began 13-and-a-half years ago. Admittedly, his first impression is that the hotel is old—the buildings, the rooms, and the design—and that renovations have to be made to make it at par with Hyatt hotels worldwide. At that time, with a lease up in the air, the hotel has to focus on what they do best—providing quality service.

Despite many years of hardships that had affected tourism on island, the Lehman shock in 2008, the earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011, the back-to-back super typhoons in 2015 and 2018, and now, the

COVID-19 pandemic, Hyatt Regency Saipan has steadfastly provided top-of-the line service to all of its guests.

"I have been in this industry for 39 years," Nishikawa said. "Our passion is to take care of the customers daily. Even though we are an old hotel, we have to be clean. We have to offer good service. We know the weak points and the strong points of this hotel, so once we get the 40 years new lease, and of course, with the renovations, this hotel is going to be fantastic."

Next year will be exciting for Hyatt Regency Saipan as they welcome yet another 40 years in the CNMI. With a new lease comes new facilities, new rooms, new restaurants, new concept, to meet the Hyatt Regency standard known all across the world.

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Hawthorne Cat congratulates the Hyatt Regency Saipan on celebrating 41 years in business!



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Hyatt Regency Saipan general manager Nick Nishikawa and Hyatt director for Human Resources Josephine Mesta.

'We care for people so they can be their best'

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

That is the Hyatt philosophy—one which the management of the Hyatt Regency Saipan deeply holds on to, especially during this pandemic.

These days, they are operating with less than half the number of their employees pre-pandemic, at just 118, and at times, they get challenged, especially when there is not a lot of guests to serve.

People is their business and

when they don't have guests, like how it is now due to the pandemic, the morale goes down, according to Hyatt director for Human Resources Josephine Mesta. But, despite the situation, they remain optimistic. Hyatt Regency Saipan is still up,

and is eagerly looking forward to the next 40 years.

"I'm excited for what's going to happen for the next 40 years. It is going to be a nice change for the island as well as for the people working here, and also our guests to know that we still exist."

Hyatt's strong point is guest service. They take pride in having great and talented staff who love the work that they do, and who are well-accepted by the community. And, to provide the best hotel service possible, Hyatt Regency Saipan's management takes the selection process for their employees seriously, with trainings provided for the lucky ones who get chosen.

"We take time in our selection process. It's hard to just tell in 15-20 minutes what kind of people you are actually hiring. Through experience, we pretty much are good at detecting a person's character, and then we work with that. They may not have the skill at all, but they have the character to serve. We work on those strengths and that's how we build."

Training is extremely important for the Hyatt Regency Saipan. With very little formal education or training support on hotel operations and management in the CNMI, initial trainings for employees at the Hyatt normally takes over a year—to ensure they provide a high level of service for their guests.

"We received a comment that the hardware is old but the software is excellent," Mesta said, Hyatt's building being the hardware, and their service, the software. "That is

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'At the Hyatt, we are family'



The best thing working here at Hyatt is my coworkers—they're not only coworkers, they're my family. Yes, it is stressful, busy, but having people like them working with me, I wake up excited to go to work. We're all lucky that [the Hyatt lease] has been extended, people are looking forward to the new Hyatt renovations. Hopefully, by that time, everyone who got furloughed will come back, and if not, for sure, a lot of people would want to work at the Hyatt. I just love working here. I can't imagine myself working for other companies.

—Antonette A. Sengebau, front desk team leader

It's unfortunate that we have to experience the pandemic, but the best thing about being here is still serving the people. Any guests that walk in and out, I'm so glad that I get to encounter them and assist them in any way. This company is such a great company to work for. It's a brand company. The company really takes care of not just the staff but anyone who walks in and out of the hotel.



—Vanessa Palacios, executive administrative assistant



The best thing about working here at Hyatt is the people around me because it's more like a family than work. Everyone helps each other. I love it here. I don't think I can see myself anywhere else. I grew and learned a lot from this company.

—Angel Mendoza, graphic artist

It's good to work [at] Hyatt because we have full benefits, and we connect with each other. I've been working here for about 20 years, and that's why I can tell the future, if they choose a job here, that Hyatt is good. I wish one of my family would work here. I wish my son would work here, or at Hyatt Philippines or anywhere. Hyatt is the best.



—Rommel Galang, engineering and maintenance



The best thing about working here in Hyatt Regency Saipan is the people. Working with my colleagues makes the job bearable, they make it easy and they add fun to it. I'll be celebrating my five years next year, and I'm looking forward to it, but it feels like I've been just working here for months. That's how fun it is here. All of my coworkers, I treat them as a family, and I'm excited to see them every day. I hope I'm still here working in the next 40 years. I hope I'll be able to work here longer and I am excited to work for the new renovated Hyatt Regency Saipan.

—Jensen Fabella, food and beverage attendant

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Nishikawa anticipates planning for the new hotel to start by the second half of next year, beginning with the Hyatt design team coming to assess the buildings and current facilities.

And while everyone waits in anticipation for what the hotel will be in the next 40 years, one thing is for sure: Right now, we can still expect the same high quality guest service that the hotel staff has been providing these past four decades, which Nishikawa refers to as the Hyatt Regency Saipan's strongest point.

It is all about the guest experience. "We have one Japanese guest who has been here from Day 1. He still comes twice or three times a year. As long as we have these guests, we have to be here to serve them. Even new guests, we need to take care of them so they become repeat customers, [so they] continue to come here."

Aside from a new look for the Hyatt Regency Saipan, Nishikawa also expressed optimism on the prospect of more international hotel brands opening on island.

"We have more than a thousand Hyatt hotels in the world. Beside us, we have the Intercontinental Crowne Plaza IHG. One [international brand] hotel can do only this much, but two hotels can do more to present [the CNMI] in the world market which, I think, is good for this island," he added.

"Each [hotel] operator has marketing money to promote overseas. It used to be only us using this marketing money throughout the world, but now, [with] IHG, I am

sure they will use those marketing money to promote this destination, Saipan, more."

Saipan, with the rest of the Northern Mariana Islands, is a tropical paradise boasting crystal clear pristine waters, colorful marine life, a rich culture, and the warmest people.

"I like Saipan. Saipan has a good nature. The people here are very friendly. It's very resort-[friendly], it's a small island. I have been to many places, and Saipan is exactly the right place for retirement, to relax, enjoy, play golf, and get into marine sports."

According to Nishikawa, every two weeks, there is a hotel opening somewhere in the world. Customers would stay in these brand new hotels, and then come to Saipan, check in at the Hyatt, and would say, "Is this Hyatt?" Looking at the old facility, they compare, he added.

But, things are looking up for the Hyatt Regency Saipan. With their new 40-year lease beginning on the first day of January 2022, everyone at the Hyatt is excited.

"On behalf of the owner, I want to say thank you so much to the people of the CNMI and Saipan who have been supporting this hotel in the past 40 years. Without their support, the Hyatt will not be here. So, we look forward to another 40 years here and I hope that people continue to give us support."

Hyatt Regency Saipan will be celebrating its 41st anniversary with a Christmas tree lighting ceremony and a staff party this Dec. 1, a prelude to welcoming 40 more years of dedicated quality service to their guests, their staff, and the CNMI community.

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Nostalgic Feels: Our best Hyatt memories

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

Hyatt Regency Saipan is celebrating its 41st year of providing quality hotel experience for all of their guests. As they enter a new phase of 40 more glorious years in the CNMI, here are a few moments that the Hyatt patrons have shared, that are sure to bring some nostalgic feels in everyone.

There are many wonderful memories for me at The Hyatt. From family photos, brunches and countless celebrations. But one stands out for me the most and it was my late grandmother's 70th birthday celebration. The staff and management executed it perfectly, which made the night a wonderful memory that I will never forget. Other memories was when Gilligan's was a dance club where the Sandcastle (not sure of that is the name) is now and they used to host many concerts and comedy shows. And lastly back in the '90s, my late Dad always took us to the Teppanyaki restaurant at the Hyatt and the great service and food can never be forgotten. Thank you, Hyatt, and I will make more memories with my children at your wonderful hotel.



Sen. Vinnie Sablan



"My best Hyatt memories definitely took place at the beach side. The view, cozy accommodations, and the nearby bar made my swimming experience one for the books!"

KSPN host Sally Limes



"My fondest Hyatt memories include beach sunsets at Skippers, hanging out with my mom all day at the spa and pool to help her maximize her club passes before they expired, and visiting with the Hyatt's resident reef herons in the garden with my godchildren."

Rep. Tina Sablan

"Oh boy...so many memories. Perhaps one of my greatest memories is having a romantic dinner with Daisy at the Oceana House (now Giovanni's) and then proposing to her at a Polynesian dinner show onstage afterwards at Gilligan's. Thank God she said yes, as there was a crowd of over 100 people in the audience. We celebrate our anniversary dinner every year at Hyatt, but with four kids joining us."

Rep. Edwin Propst



"There are so many precious memories my family and I have shared at the Hyatt. From attending the Red Cross Club 200, Christmas, Thanksgiving, New Year's, Valentine's Day, weddings, and birthdays—Hyatt has made those memories beautiful because of the excellent staff and management making sure all our guest needs are met. I know our 6-year old daughter, Alexandra, always looks forward to feeding the fish from the Japanese gardens with some Hyatt freshly baked bread."

Beth Demapan, Gil Birnbrich, and Alexandra Birnbrich



"Hyatt is where I proposed to the first lady, Diann Mendiola Tudela, on Dec. 4, 2014. The Boise State alumni hosted former secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne during his visit at the seaside. [We] also hosted Sen. [Lisa] Murkowski and the delegation, as well as Chairman Ryan Bishop."

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres

Maya Angelou once said, "People will forget what you said. They will forget what you did. But they will never forget how you made them feel."

The Joeten-Kiyu Public Library humbly thanks the Hyatt Regency Saipan for sharing 41 years of exemplary hospitality service to our CNMI community! We value the hard work and commitment your organization does in giving back to our community, especially our public libraries! You help pay it forward when you provided funding for our Video Tele-Conference Center, which has been used as a community meeting space—and continuously generating funds for our programs. You continue to sponsor our Summer Reading Program annually, which helps reach thousands of underserved families on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota every year with much needed books, activities, and supplies to keep our communities learning. You sponsor our Friends of the JKPL Golf Tournament Fundraiser which helps generate funds for year-long programming needs. You have reached so many families in so many ways behind the scenes. Happy 41st anniversary Hyatt Regency Saipan! Thank you and si yuús maåse!

—Joeten-Kiyu Public Library family

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what we share with our staff. We really can't do much about the structure of the building and the design of the building but we can make our guests have the experience."

With talks envisioning the CNMI as a world-class, high-end tourist destination by 2031, Mesta stressed the need to advance the quality of people in the workforce.

"If we're going to be a world-class destination, we need to have world-class workers. ...We [need] to start with the attitude that we are going to serve people and we are going to provide quality services, and that's through training and changing mindsets. Start from there," she added.

And that exactly is what Hyatt Regency Saipan is doing for their employees through all these years—providing training, changing mindsets—and more.

"At Hyatt, we care for people so they can be their best. We provide that care," Mesta said. "I know that we over extend ourselves sometimes but that's how we feel. It's like a one small family. Everything counts about an employee, not just at work, but also outside of work."

"I believe that's the secret, how you take care of people. You take care of your staff, the staff will take care of your guests. So far, that has worked."

Congratulations



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