

See Why This Hotel Brand Is A Dream Come True

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Jay Stein is Chief Executive Officer of [Dream Hotel Group](#), overseeing the evolution and expansion efforts of the company and its portfolio of brands: Dream Hotels, Time Hotels, The Chatwal, Unscripted Hotels, and new By Dream Hotel Group brand. With more three decades in the hospitality industry and more than 20 years with Dream Hotel Group's predecessor, Hampshire Hotels Management, Mr. Stein has served in a variety of property and corporate roles with both large and boutique hotel brands, including Hilton Worldwide, Starwood Hotels and Resorts, and Doral Hotels. He then joined Dream Hotel Group as Executive Vice President of Operations and was promoted to Chief Operating Officer in 2005, overseeing hotel operations and playing a vital role in the Company's expansion efforts. Mr. Stein was named Chief Executive Officer in 2015. In an exclusive interview for Forbes.com, Mr. Stein updated me on all the Dream's latest-and-greatest.

Q. What makes Dream hotels special, unique and different?

JS: At Dream Hotels, we truly have fun hotels and we never do just a 'rooms only' hotel. The mindset was it is a hotel with appropriate amenities. We changed that paradigm a while ago so we are now a hotspot in every destination. We are in a community and have food and beverage offerings for people that live in each area – for dining, drinking, partying, meeting, and then we have hotel guests to interface with all that fun, to create magic for those two businesses meeting. We are exciting and fun. That's what Ian Schrager focused on in the Eighties, when he was at Morgan's. It struck a chord as to what our industry should be about. He also made his hotels highly stylized, and brought much more 'residentialness' into hotels – as opposed to functional and 'not to offend anybody.' Now that's the norm. We live and breathe it. At Dream, we know that our job is to be there for the community. We've been around for more than 20 years.

Q: Tell me about what makes the Chatwal so special.

JS: It's a great little hotel in New York, but it acts like a big hotel, with a spa, ballroom, private dining room, beautiful lobby. For 76 luxurious rooms there's a lot packed into a little box. It carries the name of our owner, and you can be sure he made it special. It's an amazing design and we breathed in the soul that we do – I think it's the busiest five-star hotel for lunch I've ever seen. It's got that great lifestyle element layered on top of a five-star hotel. Butler service too.



Q: What's next for Dream Hotel Group?

JS: We have many new hotels we're announcing in 2020. The newest ones being Emma & Elissa by Dream Hotel Group in Playa del Carmen, Mexico, and Dream San Antonio in Texas, and The Bight by Dream Hotel Group in Turks & Caicos. It's been exciting. We're signing about a deal a month. We are under development now for Dream Hotels in Atlanta, Memphis, San Antonio, Dallas, and Palm Springs. They are great markets in the US. The next big opening for Dream is in Doha, Qatar, in 2021, and we will be open for the World Cup.

We're not a company that builds all of our own technology – we have to let the bigger brands take the lead. Like using your phone as a room key. We do a lot of fun amenities that are appropriate – Dream downtown in New York has a celebrity salon where they come in for \$300 haircuts. Dream Hollywood had a radio station in the hotel, and a modeling agency. In Durham we have a craft beer brewery – fun partners. The Chatwal has an amazing Red Door spa (note: it just changed its name to the Mynd spa). We don't do what's typical. We had a sneaker concierge at the Dream downtown. A lot of fashion brands come to us, and we create pop-ups for them. There's always something new happening in our hotels – you'll always have a slightly different experience.

Q: Tell me about each of the Dream brands. Let's start with Unscripted Hotels.

JS: All four of the brands have the essence of what Dream is – a great lifestyle hotel. They are not the same and are appropriate in the area where they are. They are all very different, different concepts. Unscripted is the upscale version – We have one in Durham. Within the hotel there are leased-out street-level retail spaces, a diner, a Mediterranean restaurant, a craft brewery, a great lobby lounge and a rooftop pool, for great food and parties.

Dream is upper upscale, one notch below luxury. It belongs in prime urban and resort areas. Will always have high-energy nightlife components.

Time Hotel is upper upscale segment. Not as much high-energy nightlife as the Dream. Maybe a bit more sophisticated.

The Chatwal is our five-star luxury category – we don't do boring – so it's not a typical five-star quiet luxury hotel with a boring restaurant. These are high-energy spaces at the luxury level. The New York Chatwal runs a \$675 average rate. We signed deals at the moment – in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, and Valle de Guadalupe, Mexico, also known as the Napa Valley of Mexico, an hour south of Tijuana, and in Bethel, New York, very close to where the concert for Woodstock took place. It's a wilderness lodge, a high-end destination built around a lake. All three projects are in development now.

Q: What about eco-tourism?

JS: The Unscripted in the municipality of Antoing, Belgium, is called Your Nature; it's opening before the end of the year or early next year, and it is an eco-resort. We're very excited to do that property. We are moving away from small bottles, better air in the rooms, and we are definitely taking the lead. The Belgian property is about an hour from Paris and London.

Being a lifestyle company we have found that there are real opportunities outside of LA, San Francisco, New York and Miami – we see great opportunities throughout the US and Canada, and in Central America and Caribbean – in neighborhoods you wouldn't typically think of. We are bringing the Dream

into a lot of markets, and everyone appreciates good style, fashion, and food. Were excited to be a hotel company that can do that in many different markets.

Underwritten by a design philosophy that is both surreal and contemporarily chic, Dream Hotels are individually curated properties that together comprise a unique narrative. With locations in the United States and abroad, the design and experience of each property is informed by its locale and taken to “Dream status” by a pool of world-renowned architects and interior designers. The result is a stay experience well-suited to the discerning traveler who seeks comfort in a truly cosmopolitan atmosphere. www.dreamhotels.com

Link: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/debbickickham/2020/01/27/see-why-this-hotel-brand-is-a-dream-come-true/#21a9c7c22e9a>