

## Pan Pacific's Richard Masselin is an 'entertainer'!

THE PAN PACIFIC MANILA IS A 5-star hotel in the midst of what used to be the tourist belt in the metropolis and Richard Masselin has been the hotel's French general manager since 2003. His love for the hotel industry started when he was 12. His father who had an accounting firm in Paris with several restaurant clients would tag him along during business calls. The restaurant frenzy and the excitement in the kitchens so enthralled Richard that when it was time to choose a career, hospitality was it, to the dismay of his father: "In France hoteliers take from their fathers, I am an accountant, you do not have the genes for this business!", his father exclaimed. At 16, Richard decided to take up his first job as a kitchen helper, and as the cliché goes, the rest is history.

Richard who manages this businessman's hotel with one of the highest average room rates and occupancy rates in the bay area describes his job simply as that of an 'entertainer'. He rightly tells his staff that all of them are entertainers, being on stage all the time, with everyone watching them always. He further states "being genuine in all our inter-actions is a basic job requirement. A hotelier is expected to grow the business, develop his human capital, buy the latest technology, adopt to market conditions and effectively communicate with all our stakeholders all the time. When investments reach \$100 million to \$4 billion dollars into a hotel pro-

ject, the general manager is expected to convert a respectable bottom line to produce an acceptable 'ROI' for all the investors', Richard further adds.

Richard, like many hoteliers is very fussy. As we chatted away the evening in the swanky Pacific Lounge in the hotel's 21st floor, he calls the attention of the butler and points to some bread crumbs on the floor! That is certainly an eye for detail. The Pan Pacific is known for its distinctive 'butler service' which it introduced during the hotel's opening in 1997. Since then until now its' butlers have been pouched by hotels, resorts, cruise liners, palaces and celebrities from all over the world. Richard says that interviewing candidates for new butlers is almost a daily chore for him.

These are some of Richard's personal favorites: his favorite white wine - Dom Ruinart Champagne; his favorite red wine - Chateau de Rochemorin, 1985 preferred; his favorite food - "I like natural, fresh and simple dishes, vegetables that are harvested from rich soils and during their real seasons"; his favorite dessert - Mille-Feuille, by Gaston Lenotre, Paris; and since Richard has been in the country for the past 7 years I asked him what he has observed as 'French' in the Philippines. And what a big surprise I got for an answer: "Bulalo". Richard says that when he first tasted Bulalo, he was aghast because it tasted like his favorite soup in France called 'Pot-Au-Feu'.



The Pan Pacific Manila is one of 35 hotels in their group's portfolio which includes 7 Park Royals, Pan Pacific's luxury brand. The good news is that the Pan Pacific plans to grow their brands worldwide including new projects in the Philippines. Richard's optimism about these projects in the country was very evident.

Richard has been appointed chair for the big re-launch of the industry's culinary competition called 'Chefs on Parade' by the Hotel and Restaurant Association of the Philippines (HRAP). Chefs on Parade is slated early 2011 at the SMX Convention Center.

Mabuhay Ka, Richard!

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