

*PRESS RELEASE*

**ANTONELLA FERRO, OWNER AND GM OF THE COURTYARD BY MARRIOTT ROME CENTRAL PARK, IS THE WINNER OF THE EHMA “BEST PRACTICES 2020” ON COVID-19 SOCIETY RESPONSE**

The initiative of the European Hotel Managers Association aims to highlight the support given by its members to their communities during Covid-19 emergency



*Hospitality is among the industries hit the hardest by Covid-19 pandemic. Empty rooms and chairs not only cause an economic disaster in hotels and restaurants but also in the entire supply chain. Not being able to welcome guests also causes heartache to hoteliers and their staff. However resilience is in the DNA of hoteliers.*

*“In the past months we have heard many examples on how hoteliers supported their local communities, people in need of help, staff, hospitals, peers in the industry and government”, says Ezio A. Indiani, President of EHMA and GM Hotel Principe di Savoia Milan. “In order to highlight the social impact that our members have in their communities and to inspire a new generation of hospitality managers to make the difference, EHMA decided to dedicate to this topic the “Best Practices 2020”. These best practices are neither about money spent nor hours and goods donated, these best practices are about the basic principle of hospitality: We care”.*

**Eleven projects** were presented by EHMA members. The **winner of the 2020 edition**, announced during the 47<sup>th</sup> Virtual EHMA General Assembly on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, is **Antonella Ferro**, Owner and GM of the Courtyard by Marriott Rome Central Park, for her demonstration of **great commitment to social responsibility** in such difficult times.

**Antonella Ferro** has led **3 projects** in her hotel during the lockdown. In the first project, from April 1<sup>st</sup> until May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, the Courtyard by Marriott Rome Central Park has **hosted Coronavirus positive people in quarantine** coming from the nearby Covid 2 Columbus Rome Medical Center.

“It has been a **great professional and human experience** having as ‘special guests’ patients with mild symptoms and quickly adapt to their needs”, says **Antonella**. “Our hotel was one of the first in Rome to suspend activities on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020, due to the dramatic pandemic expansion. We were asked by the nearby Gemelli Polyclinic **to put at their disposal the property for the people in quarantine**. We thought this was a **great opportunity to support the community**, which for us

has always been a priority. This incredible experience taught us to quickly adapt to change, to be empathic towards the people most affected by this terrible situation, to give greater value to the small things that can make the difference, to be resilient and willing to return to normality as soon as possible”.

The second project, called “**Marriott Winter Cold Emergency**”, concerns a **solidarity appeal launched by the Red Cross** through Federalberghi (the umbrella of the Italian Hotels Association), which was taken up by the Italian Marriott Hotels together with the two leading linen brands, Frette and Pedersoli, with **the objective to donate blankets, sheets and courtesy kits to needy people** to face the emergency due to the cold of last Winter. The donations were collected by the Red Cross volunteers who distributed them to the homeless.

The **third project “A future for Melissa”** is related to a **fundraising for a little nine-months-old baby who is suffering from SMA disease**. Melissa has undergone a medical protocol at the Gemelli Polyclinic, during which she and her family were **hosted for free at Antonella’s hotel**. The hotel owners, staff and friends participated in the fundraising to help Melissa obtain a very expensive gene therapy.

**The other Projects received were all very interesting and the EHMA Management had a difficult time to select the winner:**

Greece: Manolis Manousos, (Former) GM Apollonia Beach Resort & Spa Crete

Greece: George Spyropoulos, COO Electra Hotels & Resorts, Athens

Italy: Giacomo Battafarano, GM Rocco Forte Verdura Resort, Sicily

Italy: Patrick Recasens, GM Pullman Timi Ama, Sardinia

Italy: Cristina Zucchi, GM Lario Hotels Lake Como

Switzerland: Wilhelm Luxem, GM Baur Au Lac Zurich

The Netherlands: Erik-Jan Ginjaar, CEO Postillion Hotels BV, Bunnik

The Netherlands: Emmy Stoel, GM Sofitel Legend The Grand Amsterdam

The Netherlands: Stephan Stokkermans, GM Grand Hotel Huis ter Duin, Nordwijk aan Zee

Out of Europe: Maurizio Romani, GM Islamabad Marriott Hotel, Pakistan

**About EHMA**

EHMA - European Hotel Managers Association was **founded in Rome in 1974** by some "executives" of the hotel industry of undisputed professional ethics with the objective to maintain and increase the image of the hotel heritage. It is made up of top-level hotel general managers who constantly strive **to improve their and their staff’s professionalism** in luxury hospitality in order to maintain, perfect and innovate services offered to their customers. Currently the Association has nearly **400 members representing 29 European countries** of which about 300 are General Managers of luxury hotels. In figures, this represents around **300 hotels, 85,000 rooms and 65,000 employees**.

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