

Jewel in the city



Leeron Milstein (Dana Keren)

Jewel in the city

By Tali Herdevall

'One morning I woke up in a fantastic hotel with a new feeling of life and vitality, as if I had given life to someone,' says Leeron Milstein about the Indigo Hotel

Three months ago, in the heart of the Ramat Gan Diamond Exchange, a brilliant gemstone opened called the Indigo Hotel. The boutique hotel, which belongs to the Intercontinental Hotels Group, is the first of its kind in the Middle East. The hotel is owned by the Fishman family, with Raz and On Fishman leading the steering committee together with Leeron Milstein, who has supervised the procedures for the past seven years. Milstein, 30, is the hotel owners' representative and external relations manager.

How did you become successful in the hotel industry at such a young age?
I started out with the Fishman family about 10 years ago as the commercial manager of the company. Seven years ago, Raz began dreaming about turning one of the family's buildings in the Diamond Exchange area into a boutique hotel for businessmen. I became part of that dream, from the planning stage, execution, supervision, until the opening of the hotel, including liaising between contractors, consultants, suppliers, architects and supervisors.

What characterizes the Indigo Hotel?

The boutique brand of the hotel chain has been operating worldwide for over 10 years, with each hotel having a distinct design and character. Each hotel tells the story of its location, its integration and its feeling of belonging. The Indigo Hotel's emphasis is on its innovative design, personal service, professional and family-like staff that provides a personal experience, complete with the facilities of a large hotel that belongs to an international chain.

Like every concept hotel, you must have a concept as well.

The philosophy behind the concept of leading boutique hotels worldwide is to turn the hotel into a destination hotel, whose guests will come for its uniqueness and the luxury it offers. Most boutique hotels in the world are located in the downtown areas of large cities. The Indigo Hotel is located in the heart of the Diamond Exchange in Ramat Gan, Israel's Soho, which is visited by 120,000 businessmen daily from different sectors. Our challenge is to succeed in a location that won't be an obvious success. The challenge is not to open another boutique hotel in Tel Aviv but to have the courage to pave a new and original road in an area that no one dared to in the past.

What is the hotel's specific style?

We wanted to create an unexpected experience for the hotel's guests by using a classic European design for the hotel with urban touches characteristic of the city. The main motif is the diamond, situated in an upscale fashion house ambience. Together with interior designer Michael Azoulay, we decided that the hotel would be a combination of New York style and an exclusive European fashion house, with contemporary amenities and rooms furnished down to the finest details for the guests' convenience. The rooms are styled in urban chic, painted in Ralph Lauren colors, and include original handmade Afghan rugs, furniture made by a master carpenter, Italian marble and parquet floors. The bathrooms are covered with mirrors. The suites were designed in classic European style with high, 3.5 meter ceilings.

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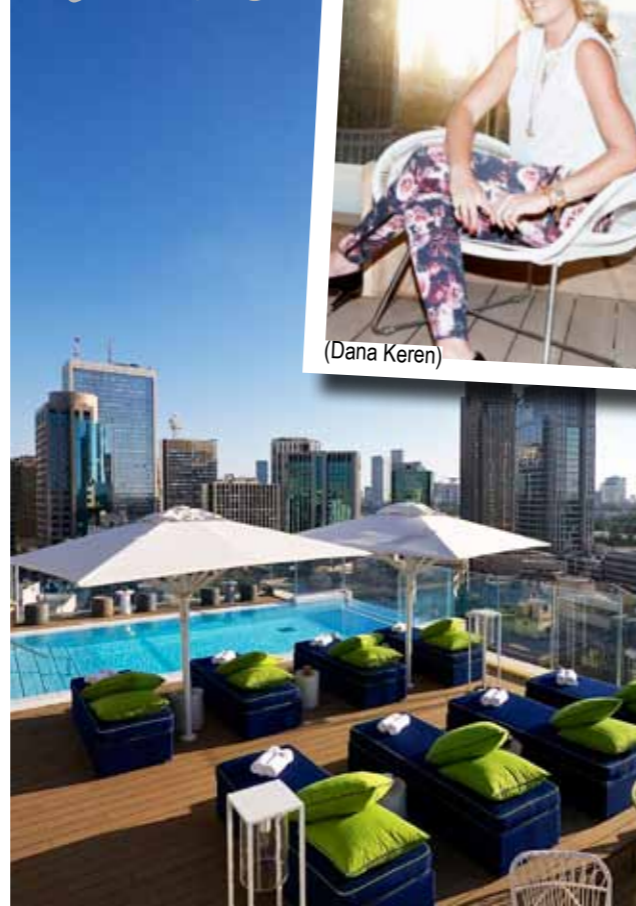
The Indigo Hotel has changed the face of Eliav St. in the diamond district. The exterior, designed by Tali Kahana of the Kahana Architects Office, resembles an embassy in a European capital.

Who is your target market?

Mainly businessmen from overseas. The hotel is situated at a central intersection that connects Ramat Gan's business world and Tel Aviv's entertainment world, answering the needs of business guests. Lifestyle fashion has entered the business world, and more businessmen are looking for boutique hotels. The hotel's design conveys the message to visiting businessmen that at the Indigo Hotel you can, and should, mix business with pleasure.

What experiences do you provide for hotel guests?

We combine business and pleasure in different ways. Kobi Abed's Blackstone Bistro & Lounge is a kosher restaurant that serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, offering gourmet as well as business meals and a well-stocked bar boasting unique cocktails exclusive to the hotel. The highlight of the project is the B On Top complex. The rooftop swimming aquarium, a blue vista in a sea of gray buildings, is the first of its kind in Israel. The pool traverses the line of the building and ends in a transparent glass wall. It's an attraction that makes people smile, and it lends a fresh new atmosphere to the area. In the evening, the rooftop complex changes into a tapas bar-restaurant and



(Dana Keren)

entertainment center for the hotel's guests and other patrons who come to enjoy all it has to offer, including an amazing view of the area.

The Clarity Spa is the first boutique hotel spa in Israel. The exclusive spa, situated on an entire floor, offers world-class treatments. The hotel also has a fully equipped fitness room with a panoramic view of Tel Aviv. And a sophisticated conference room is available with a balcony and free wireless Internet access.

What was it like experiencing the development of the hotel?

One morning I woke up in a fantastic hotel with a feeling of life and new existence, as if I had given life to someone. It's an amazing feeling of satisfaction. During the past seven years, I've had the opportunity to utilize my capabilities in this field.

Working with Raz and On Fishman led to a feeling of exceptional connection and understanding and, over the years, produced a winning team that is capable of dealing with anything. I was given the freedom to learn, create, operate, make mistakes and develop, which should not be taken for granted; I'm really thankful for this. The relationship that developed between me and the Fishman family is a relationship of trust, considerable latitude and mutual growth. Without the owners' trust and appreciation of their employees, a dream of this proportion would never come true.



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