

TRAVEL WEEKLY ASIA

Making A Difference

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Across China on the new high-speed networks, across the length and breadth of Europe, up mountain passes in Switzerland, through the grand cities of Spain, and on the bullet trains of Japan, travellers in Asia are letting the trains take the strain.



Photo: Switzerland Tourism

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Lindsey and Casey Ueberroth.

PREFERRED FAMILY VALUES

In 2014, Preferred Hotel Group entered its 10th year of private ownership and leadership by the Ueberroth family with Lindsey Ueberroth as president and CEO, John Ueberroth as chairman of the Board, Gail Ueberroth as vice chairman and chief creative officer, and Casey Ueberroth as chief marketing officer.

In March 2015, the company rebranded, positioning Preferred Hotels & Resorts as the lead master brand with five distinct hotel collections: Legend, LVX, Lifestyle, Connect, and Preferred Residences. Lindsey and Casey Ueberroth talk about business and private lives in a successful family business.

CASEY

From about age seven, every year we would travel as a family to a new country around Thanksgiving. We would all pick a spot in early fall and then go for a week or so. Then every Christmas we would all ski in Colorado. I loved that stretch every year.

It was very cool to learn and grow from values at home that would not just translate to that moment or age, but growth for me personally, and even in business. My dad was always great about pushing us to learn about what it would be like to walk in someone else's shoes - their wants, needs, and feelings.

He also encouraged us to always ask questions—that helped when we were young and moving schools. His advice was to always ask people questions and learn about them, and that is when you will start connecting with people.

As for sibling rivalry when we were young, we had the same core family values—honesty, hard work, and empathy—yet pretty different in personality otherwise. Lindsey is very outgoing and extroverted, has a crazy calendar with ongoing activities and engagements, and thrives off collaboration.

I am perhaps more introverted, cerebral, and into strategy. I have a

family of four kids too, so that keeps me more grounded to home base. I'm really into outdoor activities like surfing, golf and basketball.

I was very tempered in my approach when I accepted the opportunity to join the family business. I did a SWOT analysis to ensure that I was making the leap for the right reasons, and that I was taking an opportunity fair to market value—role details, objectives, salary. Then I clarified some "fences" or boundaries I had that needed to be set, so that family relationships would not be hindered.

My mother and father have been the strongest influences and mentors in my business and personal life. I have also had the pleasure of working with a couple of executive coaches that have mentored me through some key turning points in my life when it was helpful to have outside advice and perspective.

I'm very proud of the family I have — a wonderful supportive wife, four great loving kids with loving and curious souls. At work: that I have been given a fairly youthful team; on the whole lots of trust, autonomy, and laid framework with key objectives — and they continue to blast through goals and gain confidence. They do 98% of the real

hard work, I just help keep a path and ensure they have resources to keep going. They are impressive.

My sister has a never-ending battery and shares every ounce of her time and energy with others. She is very empathetic and driven, and truly wants the best for all she surrounds herself with and loves.

Difference and flexibility is the chemistry that has allowed us to succeed in a family business. We are all different types of souls and personalities, yet we celebrate and acknowledge those differences, and try to compromise and allow one another to have autonomy with their superlatives. It is hard to balance that always, yet we do a pretty good job.

If I had a motto it would be something like: Live simply, live truthfully, love myself well, so that I can love all others and celebrate their path and journey. (Maybe I will make that official now!)

LINDSEY

A favourite childhood memory of mine was our annual Christmas vacation to Keystone, Colorado. Growing up in California made it so much fun to be in the snow over the holidays — skiing and enjoying great family traditions.

There wasn't much sibling rivalry.

In my teens, I went through a phase where I really didn't want to be around my "little brother", but for the most part I have always adored my brother and wanted to be protective of him.

Casey and I are very yin and yang in our personalities, but in the most complementary way and this has evolved over time. Casey is more analytical, private and great at balancing personal and business. I am much more extroverted and social, thrive off of people, activities and driving towards goals.

In addition, I think I give people trust until they lose it; and with Casey, you have to work hard to earn his trust but once earned, then it is hard to lose that from him.

I don't recall weighing things out when deciding if I wanted to join the family business - it just felt like such a natural progression and something that I was passionate about. I knew I would have to work twice as hard to prove myself to the family, associates and clients, but it all seemed worth it to me.

In comparison to other families, our immediate family is pretty small, but we do celebrate most major holidays and birthdays together. With Casey's growing clan of kids, we have more reasons to get together to celebrate. I spend most of my free time relaxing with friends and family, enjoying the beach and where I live and enjoying simple pleasures like reading and the movies.

I could list a lot of accomplishments on the business front that have given me satisfaction, but I have always been most proud of the fact that we are a healthy, successful family business where everyone still loves each other and enjoy what we do. That ability to work together happily gives me satisfaction on a personal and professional level.

I admire Casey's creativity, sense of humour, strong sense of self and his never-ending curiosity. He is always looking for ways to improve himself, learn a new hobby, culture, instrument or recipe. He is quick to identify problems and pushes to resolve them. Most importantly, he is an amazing father to his four children.

I think the magic recipe for succeeding in a family business is a gallon of respect for each person's talents and strengths, a heaping spoon full of humour to get you through the tough times, a dash of tough love and honesty, and a ton of passion for the business. ■