

# The Daily Transcript

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2010 • Personal Lifestyles •

## Tapestry Resorts CEO says S.D. has huge timeshare potential



### Hospitality Beat

By Jada Thomas

**SAN DIEGO** — John Small is chairman and CEO of Tapestry Resorts, based in Mission Valley.

**Q:** Where did you get your start in travel and hospitality, and specifically the timeshare industry?

**A:** I've got an incredibly broad background in the travel industry. I've worked on six continents and have held management positions in hotels, resorts, safari game lodges and cruise ships.

I got my start from Terry Brown, president and CEO of Atlas in San Diego when he hired me as the food and beverage manager of the Hanalei Hotel in Mission Valley. I went on to manage properties, including the Shangri La Hotel Singapore; Block Hotels Africa; Sun City Resort, South Africa; Sugarbush Resort, Vermont; Royal Lahaina Resort, Maui; and Waiohai/Poipu Resorts, Kauai. I've worked for three

major cruise lines: Sitmar Cruises, Royal Viking Line and Princess Cruise Lines.

Before launching Tapestry Resorts, I was senior vice president of RCI and chief operating officer of RCI Management. Then I formed my own company, as president of International Resort Management, and in 2002, IRM merged with Resort Communications to form ResortCom International.

**Q:** How big of a business is the timeshare industry in San Diego?

**A:** Amazingly, the industry is not that large, being dominated by three or four primary groups. There is no doubt however, about the potential of timeshare in San Diego, given that it now ranks above Hawaii in popularity, and that many requests for the destination are often waitlisted. So currently the industry is relatively small, of good to excellent quality with huge untapped potential.

**Q:** How many resorts does Tapestry Resorts manage and what regions of the world are you seeing the most potential and/or growth in the industry? How about locally here in San Diego?



Small

**A:** Our company currently manages 14 resorts, with six or more in the pipeline. We see Mexico expanding rapidly, with more also happening in South America. Asia remains strong for us, and there are emerging opportunities in Africa. Practically any strong destination area is ripe for growth.

San Diego, as noted earlier, is sitting on a gold mine of opportunity, and although we do not operate any resorts here, we would love to do so. But in the meantime it's a great place to live and work!

**Q:** What services do you offer?

**A:** We work with homeown-

er associations (HOAs), mostly at sold-out timeshare resorts with more than 40 units, to manage and run all facets of their business, including: vacation ownership management, timeshare rental and exchange programs, club reservation services, collection/management of monthly dues and fees, HOA management and staffing, and management of personnel and outside vendors. We weave and customize their services, tailored to fit each resort's specific needs.

In addition, we can help developers get into the business and have the capacity to handle every aspect of the business, except for building and constructing the properties. And we also consult for those interested in being more involved in this industry.

**Q:** How does Tapestry Resorts work with timeshare resorts' homeowners associations (HOAs)?

**A:** I think the most common aspect of our involvement is collaboration. We work very closely with all of our HOA boards, providing

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them with the best professional advice; leading where appropriate, guiding where necessary and always trying to show them the various options in managing their property better.

We concentrate on the fundamentals of the quality of the product (the resort itself), the quality of service (the experience provided at the resort to the owners and guests), improvement of asset value and improved cash and financial performance. These seem to be the areas of primary concern for most homeowners associations.

**Q:** What do you tell someone who is thinking of buying into a timeshare? Pros/cons.

**A:** I believe that timeshare serves many vacation needs for most owners. Those that buy a timeshare use it the way it was intended and have over a 95 percent level of satisfaction. Although I do not own one, I have often considered it. However, I travel so much and stay at so many of them, having the ability to slot a normal vacation into my schedule is very difficult and precludes me from buying one.

But I know many happy owners who own not one or two weeks of timeshare, but as high as 18 to 20 weeks. They just love it and spend their golden years traveling all over the world on a permanent vacation.

Overall, it is a dynamic and

exciting business that given the right partners, and the right opportunity, can pay big dividends for those who are interested in pursuit of the concept.

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