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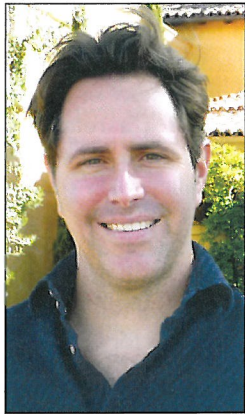
We recently spoke with Peter Gorla, Vice President & CMD of VOILÀ Hotel Rewards, which offers an alternative to big hotel chains.

InsideFlyer

Can you tell us a little about the VOILÀ Hotel Rewards program?

Peter Gorla

VOILÀ launched in 2008 and has grown to include approximately 235 hotels and 15 brands worldwide. Our points-based frequency guest program provides recognition benefits and room redemption opportunities at participating network hotels. But unlike big chain programs,



Peter Gorla

VOILÀ enables independent hotel groups to stay independent and maintain their unique qualities. We provide hotel- or group-branded solutions for our partner hotels, with VOILÀ acting as the “supporting” brand (similar to Star Alliance or oneworld for frequent flyer programs). This allows members to earn and redeem points across a wide variety of hotels and redemption partners in the VOILÀ global network. From the consumer’s perspective, this means members can enjoy the rich experiences and extraordinary qualities independent hotels offer while earning points and receiving benefits typically tied to big chain loyalty programs. Besides a

very strong earn/burn ratio compared to big chain hotel loyalty programs, VOILÀ Hotel Rewards offers the ability to book higher category rooms, like suites, using points. Many hotel loyalty programs only allow points to be used for standard room categories. In the VOILÀ network, if a room is available to book with cash, it’s available to book with VOILÀ points. We also offer the same point redemption rates at all participating network hotels, regardless of brand or location.

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You’ve been adding partners such as Delta Air Lines, Kingfisher Airlines and Qatar Airways. Do you plan to add more airline partners? Any other types of partners?

Gorla

Yes, we’ve been adding local partners that are strategically important to members or represent key relationships to our hotels. For instance, we recently launched a partnership with Multiplus Fidelidade, one of Brazil’s best known brands. This was an important partner for Hotéis Deville and Othon Hotels, VOILÀ’s two hotel partners in Brazil. And, from a member perspective, Multiplus provided a redemption link to Star Alliance member TAM Airlines, a major Brazilian carrier. We also launched a partnership with FirstClub, a music and gaming download provider, as well as a partnership with what I think is an excellent charity, WorldReader.org, whose mis-

sion is to bring e-readers (like the Kindle) to children in developing nations where illiteracy rates are highest. And we have partnered with Top Guest to allow members to earn points for geo check-ins during their travels and are currently working on a global rental car partnership.

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There are 15 independent hotel brands participating in VOILÀ Hotel Rewards. Are you looking to add more and what type of hotel is a good fit for VOILÀ Hotel Rewards?

Gorla

We are in conversation with groups around the world who represent hundreds of additional hotels, and the VOILÀ system is built from the ground-up to scale globally to many thousands of hotels. For instance, we already have seamless integrations in place with literally hundreds of different types of PMS and CRS [property management systems and central reservation systems] used by our geographically diverse collection of hotel partners. Generally, we partner with independent four- and five-star properties, which have an established presence in gateway business destinations. The best fit, of course, is with hoteliers who see the value in both brand independence and the importance of offering a world-class loyalty program to their guests that helps them level the playing field against the big brands and shift guests to lower-cost booking channels.

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Why would someone choose VOILÀ over large hotel chain loyalty programs?

Gorla

VOILÀ members are savvy and creative, and while they want to derive value from their travels, they are weary of predictable big brand hotels. They are looking for genuinely unique experiences that reflect the local spirit of their destinations. VOILÀ’s portfolio of independent hotels provides them with a wide selection of exceptional, independent hotels. With VOILÀ, members enjoy the best of both worlds: earning points while having truly uncommon travel experiences.

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Which do you think VOILÀ Hotel Rewards members value most: free nights or the special perks and recognition that come with membership in the program?

Gorla

Both elements are definitely central to VOILÀ, and any well-rounded program. In every survey we’ve conducted, members tell us they value the ability to earn and redeem points at multiple global locations. With hotels and redemption partners, they want simplicity—especially in the redemption process—and recognition like upgrades, early check-ins and late check-outs. Complimentary access to hotel amenities and free Internet is also critical.

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Is there anything else you’d like our readers to know?

Gorla

We’re giving InsideFlyer readers the exclusive opportunity to join VOILÀ and automatically receive elevated, Orion tier elite membership status and 5,000 bonus points—enjoy! Sign up at www.insideflyer.com/link/?5075.

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[feature]

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