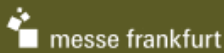


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Belmond Cadogan builds fresh reputation on historic past

By [Mary Gostelow](#) on 8/22/2019

“Going to Virtuoso Travel Week gave me the chance to reconnect with a travel community that has supported Belmond and myself personally over the years,” says Klaus Kabelitz, general manager of the 54-key Belmond Cadogan Hotel, London.

The hotel, already an historical landmark on the London travel scene, opened in February. Halfway up Sloane Street, the six-floor building dating back to 1887 had been associated over the years with socialite and actress Lily Langtry and infamous wordsmith Oscar Wilde. It is now owned by Cadogan Estates, lord of Sloane Street and much of Knightsbridge, to its north end, and King’s Road, to the south of Sloane Street. The hotel is only a few minutes’ walk to Knightsbridge’s designer boutiques and the lifestyle venues of King’s Road.



Klaus Kabelitz in the lobby of Belmond Cadogan Hotel, London

The hotel also has any-time access to Cadogan Gardens across the road. “Our guests can play tennis and have outdoor picnics if the weather allows,” said Kabelitz.

Kabelitz, who is German, ran The

Maybourne Hotel Group’s The Berkeley London, a mile away as the crow flies. Here, at The Cadogan, he has been able to design the property’s DNA. At check-in, arrivals are asked what newspaper they would like (this is not a hotel for impersonal online newspapers) and what kind of fresh milk for wakeup beverage. In the morning, your New York Times, or whatever, hangs outside the door in a proper leather holster that has a pocket for a real milk bottle. Make your own tea or coffee using bespoke china designed by William Edwards with input from the hotel’s chef, Adam

Handling. There is even a hand-knitted cosy on the teapot that has a professional label, “made by Adam's mum.”

With so much character, Kabelitz has not had undue trouble filling his rooms. Central London hotels have been more or less sold out all summer. “I forecast that 25% of our business would be from the USA but sometimes it is more like 30%, and average stay is three nights. Americans seem to like the location, the mix of history with a contemporary feel, the local touches, the small hotel atmosphere and the garden,” he said.

But it is not all rosy. With the talent situation as dire in London as it is in so many areas, Kabelitz had been working for some months before opening on filling his required tally of 120 staff members (draws included Belmond culture, his own reputation and staff fashion, by television designer Debbie Leon; in a nod to London's signature Chelsea Pensioners, retired servicemen, doormen wear scarlet coats and black hats).

“As is typical in any opening, some moved on quite quickly,” he said. “There are always those for whom the real thing is not what they were expecting, whereas staff who come to visit a completed hotel and then decide to join are in it much more for the long term. I think we have lost about 20%,” he revealed.

Just as it takes time to build any strong employee base, so it is essential for a new property to work on its profile. “Yes, being at Virtuoso Travel Week personally allowed me to spread the word even further that Belmond's first London property is now open and ready to welcome clients,” Kabelitz said with a big smile.

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Congratulations

On the opening of your hotel. Best wishes, k t

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22, 2019 | TENTER KLAUS

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