

Q&A

# Off the Cuff: Q&As with Bentley, MCM, Rosewood Hotels, South Coast Plaza and more

August 23, 2024



*Preview the latest editions of Luxury Daily's Off the Cuff series*

---

By AMIRAH KEATON

"Off the Cuff" explores the career paths, current projects and next steps of those shaping the world's best luxury brands.

The interviews feature a Proust-style twist, allowing readers to get to know industry leaders on a personal level.

**Preview the Q&A series below:**



*Mari Corella, general manager of global luxury and sneakers at eBay*

**eBay's Mari Corella | LD: What was your first job ever? What did it teach you?**

MC: My first job was buying vintage clothing at thrift stores and selling it to a resale clothing shop for profit.

This was in the 1990s before eBay existed and flipping wasn't a thing yet, so thrift stores were goldmines for designer vintage clothes. I eventually ended up working for that resale clothing shop where I learned about fashion trends and how to value clothing ranging from 1920s dresses to Louis Vuitton handbags.

I didn't realize it then, but those real-life experiences were essentially Fashion Business 101. I learned P&L management, marketing

strategies, product merchandising, and trend detection.

Read more from Mari [here](#).



*Xavier Thuizat, head sommelier at both Rosewood Hotels & Resorts and Air France*

**Air France and Rosewood Hotels' Xavier Thuizat | LD: Which skills have been critical to your success? Did you gain these skills within or outside of the workplace?**

XT: Through a diverse range of experiences, both professional and personal, I have cultivated several invaluable skills that hold great significance for me today: curiosity drives me to engage with winemakers, delve into their histories, and grasp their expertise, enabling me to passionately share their stories with guests.

Rigor and consistency are foundational principles essential in the luxury gastronomic realm, guiding my approach to work diligently and uphold high standards.

Generosity fuels my desire to inspire customers, creating experiences tailored to each individual to maximize their enjoyment and ensure every visit is uniquely memorable.

Read more from Xavier [here](#).



*Debra Gunn Downing, executive director of marketing at South Coast Plaza*

**South Coast Plaza's Debra Downing | LD: What is the best piece of advice you've ever received?**

DD: I owe my work ethic to my father, an entrepreneur who owned and ran a large farm and other businesses. Through him, I learned flexibility, adaptability and the importance of a positive attitude.

I took a job in the oil industry right out of college, which was not exactly my first choice of an industry. However, I had a mentor at my university who encouraged me to take it and simply soak up everything I could about the job.

He knew what I couldn't see at the time: that everything you do prepares you for the next position.

I ended up working there for seven years, and it was invaluable. Life is an evolution, not a straight line.

Read more from Debra [here](#). Explore additional interviews with Bentley's [Chris Cooke](#), MCM's [Sarika Rastogi](#), Brown Harris Stevens' [Bess Freedman](#), Blade's [Roisin Branch](#), Monogram's [Julie Burns](#) and Positive Luxury's [James Edney](#).

---

© 2024 Reliance Relocation Services, Inc. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.