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- Receptionist of the Year
- AICR Leadership Certification
- Past Winners... where are they now?

# internationalist amicalist 2017



Amicale Internationale des  
Sous-directeurs et Chefs de  
Réception des Grand Hôtels



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# Dear Fellow Amicalists

W

elcome to Paris “La Ville-Lumière” for the 24th AICR International Congress. It is one of many times that we gather here for an international event, including the 4th Annual Congress in 1979 and in 1989 for the 9th Annual Congress in more recent history, in 2004 for a bi-annual international presidium.

Paris is most certainly we call home, so welcome home to all of our members and thank you to Le Meurice Hotel who has now become our official place of registration. Paris holds our history and has been called home by many who played such an important role in our association’s history, including the late Marcel Elbaz who was a founding member in 1964 when manager at the Hotel Claridge’s and laerly international secretary and also the late David Campbell, past Chef de Reception at the Ritz -who is remembered annually when our coveted International Receptionist of the Year Trophy, “the David Campbell Trophy” is awarded.

Paris was nicknamed the “City of Light” originally because it was the centre of education and ideas during the Age of Enlightenment. In 1828, Paris lit the Champs-Elysées with gas lamps - it was the first city in Europe to do so. I would like to thank Francois and the Paris organising committee who has worked hard to ensure that all those lights that Paris is famous for, are shining brightly and are ready to welcome us with an amazing itinerary. We are all in for a true Parisian experience.



This year also sees the end of my second term and fourth year as International President. For me personally it has been a remarkable time, a journey with peers, the International Committee where we have held ourselves accountable to high standards, worked hard and inspired each other to deliver more. As a team we have all grown on our journey and it is a time I will always value. Having recently read the minutes of my first mid-year meeting, which ironically too was held here in Paris in 2013, I can only say that I am immensely proud of the goals that were set and what the team has achieved in three and a half short years. Olivier, Hani, Duncan, Kerstin, Franck, Oliver and Terry - it really has been a pleasure and congratulations on your achievements:

- reaching over 1000 members and welcoming three new sections
- the introduction of hotelkit throughout the association as a task management, resource and historical archive systems.
- full implementation of the educational initiatives at every congress
- establishment of an international sponsorship programme
- creation of a new website
- the creation of the AICR Leadership Certification and its educational fund
- creation of the International Amicalist Magazine
- creation of the AICR Video and PowerPoint presentation
- extended and formalised agendas for the presidiums and mid-year meetings
- bi-annual support calls with all sections
- initial concept formation of our own mentoring programme

It has truly been a pleasure serving the AICR. As I have always said the association is only what each one of us makes of it. Great plans are underway. The AICR’s future is bright.

Wishing you all a fantastic Congress - enjoy Paris, with a true group of professionals and friends.



Darin J Davies MIH  
International President

# AICR Congress - Paris 2017

## Programme

Wednesday 22nd February 2017

*Hotel Le Méridien Etoile*

Individual arrival

### **Workshop for David Campbell Trophy Candidates**

Workshop by Asforest : strategies for effectively managing conflict

"The aim of this training course is to improve communication within teams, develop listening skills and create a real team spirit. The course will discuss the correct behavior to adopt in order to manage conflict".

*Hotel Le Meurice*

### **Past Presidents Dinner**

And

**David Campbell Trophy Dinner** for Presidents, Candidates, International Committee, Jury Members and Organisation Committee.

Thursday 23rd February 2017

*Hotel Le Méridien Etoile*

Individual arrival

### **2017 David Campbell Trophy Competition (In association with Gold Key Media)**

Educational Workshop by MJ Flanagan  
– Motivate for Success

Educational Workshop by Kevin Daly  
– Work Smarter, Not Harder

Presentation Luxury Attitude  
by Hervé de Gouvion Saint Cyr

- Asking the right questions about the guest experience and presentation of the E-Movie training method.

*Bateaux Parisiens*

### **Dinner cruise and sightseeing**

By night, discover the full splendour of a panoramic view aboard an all-glass boat. Along the Seine river, you will enjoy one side of the city of light

Friday 24th February 2017

*Hotel Le Méridien Etoile*

### **Workshop**

### **Presidium Meeting**

### **Sightseeing Tour with Big Bus Company**

Lunch at Hotel Le Méridien Etoile

**General Assembly** for all AICR members & Sponsors showcase during interval

*Moulin Rouge*

"Féerie" consists of: a troupe of 80 artists, including 60 Doriss Girls recruited world-wide; 1000 costumes of feathers, rhinestones and sequins, made in the most famous Parisian workshops ; sumptuous sets in shimmering colors, uniquely designed by Italian artists; outstanding international acts, and the awaited return of the giant aquarium; all this performed to original music recorded by 80 musicians and 60 chorus singers.

Show and Dinner

Saturday 25th February 2017

### **Les Galeries Lafayette Paris Haussmann**

The Haussmann department store is the second top tourist attraction, after the Eiffel Tower. It has become one of the must-see "greats" in the world.

Galeries Lafayette VIP arrival and welcome cocktail  
Afternoon at leisure

*Intercontinental Paris Le Grand Hotel*

### **Gala dinner & 2017 David Campbell Trophy ceremony in association with Gold Key Media**

Offering historic charm in central Paris, the glorious Salon Opéra, with its gold leaf decor, chandeliers and ornate plasterwork, is the largest and most famous ballroom in Paris.

Sunday 26th February 2017

*Hotel Le Méridien Etoile*

Breakfast at leisure

Individual departure





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# AICR Congress

*Bonjour from Paris !*



By the time you will be reading this one thing is certain, you will have definitely fallen in love with this beautiful city we call home : PARIS.

Indeed, our teams have been working day in and day out to organise the perfect congress for our yearly 'get together' this February 2017.

Naturally, this feels like a great opportunity to extend a huge thank you to our amazing **Paris 2017 Organizing Committee**, so

graciously led by our former President : François Lenne.

None of this would have been possible without all of your hard work and dedication.

What a team and what an outcome !

Welcoming everyone to our beautiful City of Lights means a lot to us. Thank you everyone for coming, we hope we were able to make this a truly memorable moment for all of you !





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# AICR Congress

## the 2016 Role Play scenario

For the purpose of this task you are required to adopt the 'role' of a receptionist at the Intercontinental Hotel, Vienna

Please read the scenario carefully. You are expected to use your experience, imagination and knowledge of a receptionist. Additionally, you are expected to be familiar with the information contained in this brief and are strongly encouraged to conduct further research on the hotel and surroundings and use it in your role-play. Good luck!

### **The Hotel (a brief summary)**

The Intercontinental Hotel, Vienna is located in Vienna's city centre with breathtaking views across the Stadtpark.

The hotel is ideally placed to discover historic Vienna with its concert halls, sights such as St. Stephen's Cathedral and exclusive shopping areas such as KaerntnerStrasse or Graben.

The hotel opened in 1964 and at 39 metres high was one of the city's first skyscrapers. It has been refurbished on a number of occasions most recently

in 2008-2009.

Elegant rooms with park views offer flat-screen TVs, minibars, tea and coffeemaking facilities, Wifi and many other facilities as would be expected in a 4 star hotel. With 458 bedrooms and suites to choose from there is something to suit everyone. Classic rooms at €189, Deluxe and Club rooms from €239 and a choice of 49 suites from €339, with the Presidential suite at €2,900 on the top floor offering spectacular views across the city.

The Club lounge for guests staying in executive rooms and suites offers a relaxed and private area for guests for breakfast, lunch or just a coffee.

The hotel food and beverage services include an upscale restaurant serving the finest seasonal products. The ornate, classic café - Cafe Vienna - with coffee specialities plus renowned Viennese pastries. For night owls there is a chic bar, the Intermezzo bar, with live music until 2.a.m.

Additional facilities include a gym and a spa, plus a business centre, meeting rooms and event space. The hotel has 16 flexible meeting rooms offering





multiple solutions to conference and meeting organisers.

**Scenario**

N.B.: for the purpose of this role play you are to assume that you are alone at Reception.

In other words, you will have to face the situation without counting on the presence of your line manager, colleagues, concierge, housekeeper, etc. Hence, receptionists are fully empowered to make on-the-spot decisions (e.g. giving complimentary amenities, negotiating rates or upgrades when appropriate).

Your performance will be assessed based on your personal judgment, common sense, experience and professional skills.

It is Thursday, 14th January 2016, you are on the middle shift and it is about 16:30hrs. The 3-day International AICR Congress is starting tonight with all delegates staying at the Intercontinental Hotel Vienna.

The hotel has been fully booked every night for the last week. This has been a very busy time and trying to satisfy every guest's individual requirements has been extremely challenging.

This evening you only have a king bedded studio suite and a king bedded executive suite available other than the pre-allocated rooms for the remaining arrivals.

At the moment the reception and lobby are very quiet. Your colleague has now left the desk to go on their break, but you know they were going out of the hotel for about 20 minutes.

You are alone at the desk.

You will now meet two guests.

Mrs. Bellaby approaches the desk. She arrived this morning for three nights and registered, but her room (Deluxe room) was not ready. Her luggage was left with the concierge. Mrs Bellaby was advised that her room would be ready from 15:00 hrs and she would just need to collect her key from reception.

Mr Pliischke, who is a regular corporate guest at the hotel approaches the desk. You do not have a reservation for him and are wondering why he is here now. He says he has a reservation from tonight for 3 nights, but you are unable to find any booking for him.

# AICR International Presidents



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Paris	Maud Pfluger	Germany	Miriam Ziemer
Singapore	Adeline Teoh	Morocco	Badri Abdelmounaim
Suisse	Najib Arayer	Indonesia	Ari Wibowo
Austria	Doris Schwarz	New Zealand	Israel Suarez Guido
Czech Republic	Roman Talman	UK	Sebastian Knoerr
Cote d'Azur	Véronique Baribaud	Qatar	Ahmed Kamel
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# 2017 DAVID CAMPBELL TROPHY

*In association with Gold Key Media*

## THE FINALISTS 2017



Priyanka Payal Sharma  
CityLife Hotel, New Zealand



Christina Yeo Boon Jing  
Parkroyal on Pickering, Singapore



Morgane Leonard  
Disney's Hotel New York, Paris



Sarah Lena Schwarzacher  
Palais Hansen Kempinski Vienna, Austria



Amir Ben Mansour  
Jumeirah Zabeel Saray, UAE



Ottavia Polloni  
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Claudio Catano  
The St Regis Rome, Italy



Kateřina Chocholoušová  
Boscolo Prague, Czech Republic



Helerin Haab  
Von Stackelberg Hotel Tallinn, Estonia



Ellena Brueckner  
Mandarin Oriental Munich, Germany



Agata Szparaga  
Hotel Sofitel Warsaw Victoria, Poland



Beatriz Pablos González  
Gran Meliá Palacio de los Duques, Spain



Beatrice Gallo  
The Connaught Hotel, United Kingdom



Ogallo Joshua Orao  
InterContinental Doha, Qatar



Katherine Emily Dey  
Monte Carlo bay hotel & resort, Cote d'Azur



Emily Short  
Doma Hotels, Australia



Omar Jaddoubi  
Amanjena Resort, Morocco



# Sofia Barroso - 2016 Winner



*I have recently come back from the Paris Course that I won as a prize for being the DCT winner. I have loved this week in ESSEC Business School and enjoyed the class with Mr. John Fareed. One of the best Hospitality Consultant from the US who is working all over the world. During this week we had also lecturers from different*

2016 it has been a gorgeous dream to me and I wish I would not ever wake up. Being the Receptionist of the Year 2016 it has been a great opportunity and a huge honor.

When I decided to join the Spanish competition I felt already proud of representing the Villa Magna Hotel. However, when I won I could not be happier as representing Spain was a dream to me. I come from a humble family with no national or international winners whatsoever. Therefore, I became a big pride to my family as we never had anyone that international.

The journey in Vienna was an unforgettable experience, as Paula McMinn mentioned on the previous magazine, since the moment you get off the plane, you are treated like royalty. This royalty increases in such a majestic city like Vienna with waltz lessons and imperial endless meals and sightseen visits. When I met the candidates, immediately I had a warm feeling as, we are profession colleagues, we work on the same atmosphere and we share many experiences. At the end of the journey we became a great family and when we were all together on the stage at the Gala dinner, we could not believe our journey ended there.

The Gala Dinner was incredible at the Imperial Hotel in Vienna, it was a magical night for the Spanish AICR Section as our dream came true getting the David Campbell Trophy to Spain for

the first time in 21 years of competition. I could not believe I achieved that and I could not feel happier for the Spanish section and myself.

Once I landed in Spain, my friends and family where waiting for me at the airport with flowers, huge smiles and lots of love. At the next day, when I brought the trophy to the hotel I had more flowers and greetings from every colleague. I realized then that my journey just started.

It was a nonstop of interviews on radio, television and press, at least 3 interviews a day during a month. Tourism is one of the biggest industries in Spain and therefore, this achievement was even more important. From all the interviews I made, probably the most important was on a National newspaper (ABC) I was on the back cover and an ex-president on the cover. This newspaper

**the only thing you  
have to do is being  
yourself, being  
genuine, and  
sincere.**

# David Campbell Trophy Best Receptionist of the Year



fields within the Hospitality Management sector.

I truly believe that this course made me grow up more and motivated me to keep on growing in my career within the Hospitality Industry.

was placed on every room at the Hotel and the guests approached the Front Desk all the time to congratulate and meet me. Lastly, the most enriching experience I enjoyed was visiting and making a presentation to the students at the Tourism University in Madrid, they asked me as many questions as they felt and I enjoy very much showing them my knowledge in the Industry.

During these year and since I walked away with the trophy on my hands in Vienna, I have met lot of people and lived many different experiences that only being a winner you can live. However, the most important is that I have learnt a lot about myself and I have grown not only as a professional but as a person.

Getting ready for the Receptionist of the Year Competition as a candidate, you will have lots of tips and advises about what to say and how to behave. Nevertheless, the only thing you have to do is being yourself, being genuine, and sincere. We all have experience at the Front Desk, we have different backgrounds and cultures but we are all driven by the hospitality industry passion. The only difference between every candidate is the personality and being natural is the best advice I would like to give to the future candidates.

Good luck to all the candidates, you are already the best in your country, you are already a winner!!

**ABC** PAÍS: España  
PÁGINAS: 80  
TARIFA: 19365 €  
ÁREA: 463 CM<sup>2</sup> - 63%

FRECUENCIA: Diario  
O.J.D.: 123534  
E.G.M.: 497000  
SECCIÓN: TELEVISION

27 Enero, 2016

EL PULSO DEL PLANETA

## La mejor recepcionista del mundo es española

Se llama Sofía Barroso, tiene 27 años y acaba de ganar el trofeo que entrega una poderosa asociación internacional de directivos de hoteles

PATRICIA ESPINOSA DE LOS MONTEROS



BELEN DIAZ

**P**ues sí, resulta que por primera vez en más de dos décadas la mejor recepcionista de grandes hoteles del mundo es española. Se llama Sofía Barroso, tiene 27 años y trabaja desde hace dos en el hotel Villa Magna de Madrid. ¿Cuál es el secreto de su éxito? «Ser resolutiva, tener carisma y empatía», responde. «También es importante la rapidez en solucionar situaciones difíciles sobre la marcha», añade mientras enseña el David Campbell Trophy, el codiciado trofeo que entrega anualmente la poderosa asociación «Amicale Internationale des Chefs de Réception et Sous Directeurs des Grands Hôtels».

El concurso cuenta con una parte teórica en la que un jurado de cinco expertos examina al concursante sobre cuestiones como la gestión de reservas, el trabajo en equipo y las tarifas. «Después se escenifica un juego de roles -si-gue contando Sofía-, una especie de reality donde tú estás en la recepción sola y en las condiciones de hotel lleno y llegan dos huéspedes ficticios que te plantean supuestos que hay que solucionar».

Un recepcionista de hotel es realmente su tarjeta de presentación, lo primero que te encuentras y el último que te despiden. Sus deberes abarcan el registro de entradas y salidas de los clientes, la entrega de llaves, la realización de reservas por teléfono o por correo electrónico, la preparación de recibos y el cobro de las facturas. Deben responder preguntas de los huéspedes e intentar solucionar sus quejas y esto implica agilidad, creatividad y rigurosidad.

Barroso, la nueva ganadora mundial, es diplomada en Turismo y máster en Dirección Comercial y Marketing con seis años de experiencia en el sector, tres trabajando en el Cumberland Hotel de Londres y desde hace dos en el Villa Magna. Nuestra española fue elegida entre quince candidatos de hoteles tan emblemáticos como el Burj Al Arab de Dubái, el Baur au Lac de Zúrich o el Ritz Carlton de Singapur. «El premio -nos cuenta- no tiene dotación económica y además hay que devolver el trofeo, pero el año que viene forma-

ré parte del jurado que lo otorga y me han regalado un máster en hostelería valorado en 3.000 euros en París».

Las pruebas que le pusieron, reconoce la galardonada, no fueron muy difíciles. «de hecho aquí en el hotel nos enfrentamos a situaciones peores a diario». «Lo más raro que me ha ocurrido en la recepción fue una vez que un cliente vino solo al hotel y me pidió dos habitaciones. Le pregunté si iba a utilizar las dos y me contó que había exhumado el cadáver de su padre y que no podía dormir con las cenizas en el mismo cuarto». Desde entonces Sofía prefiere no hacer ciertas preguntas.

# Previous Winners... where are they now?

I always thought that the Front Desk was my favourite place, as it is the centre and the heart of the Hotel and the first point of contact for the guest, where you have the responsibility of having the initial impact on their stay. The lobby has a special buzz and atmosphere, giving guests the first impression of the Hotel's personality and what they can expect from their stay. Working there means you have the opportunity to connect with almost all of the guests, becoming their gateway to the different departments and services of the Hotel, whilst living and breathing the excitement that a day at a busy Reception brings.

I stayed working at the Front Desk for another year and a half after winning International Receptionist of the Year, before the Hotel management asked if I would be interested to move to the Spa for a new challenge. Whilst I was a little unsure at first, it gave me the opportunity to become a department head for the first time and opened up a whole new world to me that I hadn't previously considered. So there I was, at the head of the Spa, after only receiving a few massages before in my life and knowing very little about this new world that seemed so far away from my comfort zone in Front Office. Soon though, I discovered that the skills I'd learnt from my time at the Front Desk weren't so different from what I'd need in the Spa and I understood why this position had been offered to me. I realised that I could make a positive impact on the operations of the Spa, while at the same time, absorbing so much new and exciting information about everything related to the Spa industry.

The new challenge saw me dive headfirst into the world of wellness, beauty and fitness, requiring me to be always on the verge of discovering a new treatment or the latest products and trends. I really found my second passion. In the world of Spa, I am constantly challenged to have the answers to beauty and lifestyle questions that I previously didn't even know existed, and it's this that keeps me on my toes and sparks my curiosity every day.

Whilst the Front Desk still holds a very special place in my heart, I'm very happy to now be in a Spa role and at the moment, do not see that I would change back any time soon. Why? It's the satisfaction that I get from helping people feel better, through intimate and detailed encounters

**My first  
commitment is to  
follow the golden  
rule, treating  
others as I wish to  
be treated**

with guests who have come to you specifically for the purpose of relaxing. It is still so incredible to me to see the impact of a 60 minute massage on someone's day, or even life, and it's this that keeps me so passionate about Spa; its effect on people.

Since January 2010, I have been lucky enough to share this passion for beauty, well-being and Spa in my regional role with Four Seasons, in which I first supported Spas in Europe, and now support the Spas in the Middle East and Africa region. With my present role as Senior Spa Director at Four Seasons Resort Seychelles, I get to enjoy the most beautiful office in the world, in our tropical hilltop sanctuary overlooking the Indian Ocean. Working with the other unique Spas in the region I offer my support, guidance and motivation to make sure our Four Seasons Spas are the best in the industry and consistently offer that signature level of service that Four Seasons is known for.



## Verena Fox - 2006 Winner



Ten years have passed since I won the award, but my love for Four Seasons still remains strong and through my career I've come to realise that my roles in Front Office and Spa have many things in common. With Four Seasons, my first commitment is to follow the golden rule, treating others as I wish to be treated, whether in Front Office, Spa, or in daily life. It's this core principle that has helped me throughout my career and which I hope to be able to pass onto my team here in Seychelles and also to my guests, whether at the Spa or anywhere else.

Senior Spa Director  
Mea Four Seasons  
Resort Seychelles

# Previous Winners... where are they now?

## Eve Stacey - 2008 Winner

### 1. What's the feeling like, when you were announced as winner of the Best Receptionist in the world?

I was completely shocked, I had no idea I was going to win! When I heard my name called out, I wasn't sure what to do. In fact I think the New Zealand AICR President at the time, Terry, had to direct me to head towards the stage to receive the award. I was fortunate enough to have great support around me, including my now, Husband, Aaron. When I got up on stage, I was able to look out and see his face, as well as all the others who support the competition and I felt a huge sense of pride and excitement. It was a wonderful experience that has been really valuable throughout the rest of my career.

### 2. Did your Hotel and your team have a celebration when you returned with the trophy?

When I returned, there was a lot of excitement from the hotel I worked at, my co-workers, friends, family and even the local media. I was interviewed in the national newspaper which I was a little shy about at first, but now, looking back on it, I think it really helped generate more awareness of the ROTY competition and AICR in New Zealand. The hotel team was great, they put on a lovely afternoon tea for me to congratulate me properly.

### 3. How were your feelings, representing your hotel and most importantly your beautiful country?

It was an honour. I was very proud to represent New Zealand and the New Zealand hospitality sector as well as The Intercontinental Wellington hotel. I was literally travelling to the other side of the world to compete in the beautiful Cote d'azur so I wanted to make sure I represented my country well and I looked forward to experiencing a new culture, meeting fellow hospitality professionals from all over the world and an international trip. It was very exciting.

### 4. This journey has gained you many experiences, would you like to share with us a few?

At the time I was due to compete in the ROTY competition, I was completing a Business degree at University in New Zealand while working at The

Intercontinental Wellington hotel in order to fund my studies, which I really enjoyed. One day I was at work, I was asked by my Manager to compete in the ROTY competition which was a bit of a surprise that turned out to be an absolutely amazing journey full of success, excitement and pride.

This competition was very new to New Zealand at the time so the fact I was just invited to compete was exciting enough, to actually win and bring the David Campbell Trophy back home to New Zealand was a great honour. Once I got home, I was completely inspired to spread the word across hospitality institutions

**I believe to be  
“of service” is a  
fundamental skill  
that all people  
should learn.**

in New Zealand about the level of pride, service and above all, friendship I'd seen at the AICR and ROTY event.

Since then, I have left the hospitality sector to pursue a career in Information Technology (IT). I've maintained a connection to the AICR in New Zealand and often come and judge and coach the future ROTY participants, which I really enjoy.

Not long after I left hospitality, I had a realization that I'm sure I gained from my entire experience working in hospitality and attending the ROTY event. I believe that service skills, a desire to help people and to take pride in what you are offering to your customers are the core skills that have made me successful throughout

# David Campbell Trophy Best Receptionist of the Year



IT Change Manager

my career. I believe to be “of service” is a fundamental skill that all people should learn. Those who work and hospitality are amazing people who live and breath this. The importance of service is the most valuable lesson I learned through this competition and time spent in hospitably which I will carry with me always and want to encourage others to do the same.

### 5. What advice would you give to the new DCT participants?

Be yourself and enjoy everything this event and experience has to offer. It is a few days where hundreds of like-minded people come together to celebrate and showcase what hospitality represents. It is an amazing thing to be a part of so try not to let your nerves cloud your ability to experience everything the founders of AICR hoped to achieve by setting up this associate. You'll build ever-lasting friendships, acquire knowledge from some of the greatest leaders in hospitably world wide and even challenge yourself to step outside of your comfort zone. I can honestly say that even if I didn't win, I would have still gained a lot from the experience. So when you look at it like that, you've really already won, just by being there. So enjoy!



## Sven Lööndre - 2001 Winner



I used to work as a concierge/receptionist at Reval Hotel Olümpia (nowadays Radisson Blu Hotel Olümpia) at the time when I was invited to participate in the competition Receptionist of the Year 2001 in Estonia. It was first time when competition was held in Estonia so I am honoured to be the first winner of Estonian competition within it's 15 years history.

It was a great experience. Scary and challenging at the same time and how overwhelming was to the feeling when jury announced my name as a winner. This competition and few months later January 2002 international final in Berlin were definitely one main reasons why I am still 15 years later working in the hospitality sector.

# Previous Winners... where are they now?

## Paula McMinn - 2015 Winner

After an extremely busy and exciting year, when someone mentions "Receptionist of the Year", I no longer think of it as a title, but as a fantastic opportunity I was fortunate enough to experience.

When applying for the UK competition, I approached the challenge with my competitive nature and outgoing personality. Many people had given me advice, mentioned possible questions and made sure my appearance was perfect. As important as that input was, I gradually began to realise that it's not about what people have told you to say, it is all about how you feel. Being a receptionist is not an easy task and it takes someone special to deal with difficult guests, to be the first impression of a hotel and to be part of the reason for a return visit. Every day, receptionists make use of a skill set that we have acquired through experience, and by entering the competition you are able to add another page to that ever growing book of knowledge.

After winning the UK competition, I was ecstatic at the thought of going to Singapore, let alone knowing what a great competition awaited us once we arrived. From the moment you get off the plane as a candidate, you are treated like royalty. The thought that goes into the programme for the competition is remarkable and ensures you will have an unforgettable experience.

Meeting the candidates for the first time seemed the most daunting however those initial fears were immediately put aside as we all got along extremely well. We were all dealing with the same excitement and fears and to not go through that alone was so refreshing. The planned excursions, endless meals, nights out dancing and friendships made, were just a few highlights of that week.

Time flew by and when we were all on stage as competitors and friends at the gala dinner, we could not believe it had come to an end.

Winning the David Campbell trophy was a big stepping stone in my career as well as my personal growth. Career wise I was promoted to a



### Small Luxury Hotels Quality Assurance Executive

management position at my hotel and I have loved every minute of the challenge. I have appeared in newspapers, on the front cover of a magazine and been invited to a business seminar to appear on a discussion panel as an industry leader. These opportunities have opened countless doors

for me and have allowed me to be involved in areas I did not think possible.

On a personal note I have learnt an incredible amount about myself. It is in people's nature to place a "label" on you once an acclaimed award has been won, however I have continued being my friendly, spontaneous self. I believe that my success in the competition was the outcome of being my natural self and showing my true interest in the industry. We all have different backgrounds, experiences and strengths but what we have in common is our passion for the hospitality industry. This passion keeps us going, drives us, challenges us and sets us apart as the best receptionists.

This competition is an exciting journey and the trophy was something tangible I walked away with that night in Singapore. The friendships, opportunities, lessons learnt, experiences and emotions I took home with me, were the intangible benefits that I felt weighed a lot more than the David Campbell Trophy.



See you at the

**AICR Congress 2017**

in Paris

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# Candidates 2016



Victoria Hillman  
New Zealand



Sofia Barroso  
Spain



Mareike Leonie Balman  
Qatar



Madison Groom  
Australia



Louise Brodie  
UEA



Lily Julieth Vargaz  
Narvaez  
Germany



Katerina Petrovova  
Czech Republic



Judith Schroder  
Switzerland



Jekaterina Matinkin  
Estonia



I Gusti Ayu Julita Dewi  
Indonesia



Harriet Henderson  
UK



Christophe Heng  
Paris



Berit Geiler  
Austria



Alvin Tang Wei Lang  
Singapore



Alexandre Longavesne  
Côte d'Azur



Alessandra Dornetto  
Italy

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# Past Presidents Dinner

S

ome time ago the organisation committee of the AICR Vienna 2016 were contacted by Marga Ditsch with the suggestion to invite the Past Presidents to participate in a special "Past Presidents' Dinner" that could be included as part of the programme of future annual AICR congresses.

During the mid year meeting of the International committee in Dubai the Committee declared that they loved the idea, and on Wednesday, January 13, 2016 at the Hotel Sacher in Vienna, the new tradition was inaugurated!

We should find time and leisure to enjoy a good meal



and a noble glass of wine and discuss the events of the day as well as the wonderful memories of the past. It's not only the family who meets for a meal but also friends and the family of the Amicale who will celebrate this occasion.



**"To dine together is called sharing the bread of friendship!"**

# Auction

Amicalist International would like to thank **Hani El Sharkawi** for organising an Auction at Wine Tavern Dinner at Fuhrpassl Huber in Vienna Congress last year.

We have raised EUR 6030 at the auction where they auctioned hotel rooms donated by all AICR member hotels and the funds went towards the Leadership Certification program.



# AICR launches Leadership Certification

AICR has partnered with Lighthouse Organizational Development to provide online training and development opportunities for its members. The AICR Leadership Certification (LC) program was launched in January 2017 and includes a series of educational modules as well as online coaching.

The learning content was developed by award-winning content providers and hand picked carefully to achieve the goals of the AICR Leadership Certification (LC) which include:

- **Offering added value to AICR members**
- **Increasing AICR membership base**
- **Increasing attractiveness of working in Front Office**
- **Providing a serious, high-quality development opportunity**
- **Creating a recognizable sign of excellence in Front Office**
- **Making LC courses accessible online in order to be accessible to all members from around the world**

The LC consists of 3 modules, with 4-8 courses each which cover areas such as conflict resolution, communication skills, E-Mail management, NLP, negotiation skills and diversity management.

After the end of the pilot program, the AICR LC will be open to all AICR members as of January 2018.

If you would like to be part of this outstanding learning and development opportunity please contact:

**Hani El Sharkawi**, AICR International Counselor  
hani.elsharkawi@gmail.com



**LIGHTHOUSE**

*Organizational Development*



# Midyear AICR International Committee meeting

## Warsaw Poland

Friday July 1st to Sunday July 3rd 2016

Thank you very much to Marcin Gałazka – ex Operational Manager at the Sound Garden Hotel Airport and Milosz Stanislawski – General Manager at the Sound Garden Hotel Airport who hosted Midyear AICR International Committee meeting.

Everything was perfect for the Int'l committee to hold a very productive 2 full day meeting.

It was the opportunity to meet up with the very impressive group of members of the Polish AICR Section.

We had a lovely dinner at Hotel Rialto at Salto Restaurant,

sponsored by AICR Poland. As we were busy with our meeting the Polish group was in the meeting room next door with their own training course and general assembly.

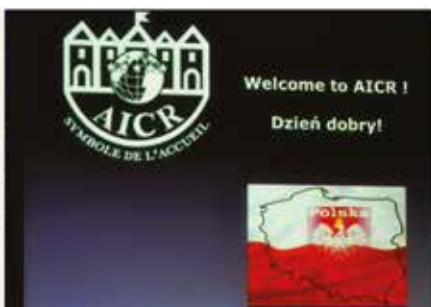
In the evening our host took us to the historic city center for a typical polish dinner at Zapiecek Polskie Pierogarnie

Not to forget LEVEL27 !

Great moment of friendship.

*Under the leadership of Darin Davies, the very busy agenda was covered with the main topics :*

- Paris Congress update
- Mentoring Program Update
- Treasury Update and Educational Fund
- Social Media & Website
- Educational Project Update and Paris Educational Sessions
- Hotelkit Review
- Analog thinking - THE CREATIVE SESSION



# Receptionists day - 2016

May 10<sup>th</sup> 2017 must be in your agenda.

The purpose of celebrating this day is to recognise the contribution of our dedicated hardworking receptionists, and to promote this unique profession.

As soon as you enter a hotel, the first person you approach is always the receptionist with a friendly smile. Ever gracious, this person attends to your queries and assists you with any requests. Receptionists are the ones who are often responsible for providing a memorable first impression to your guests as well as keeping the day-to-day operation running smoothly and efficiently.

Member hotels submitted a photo of their Front Office team on the 11th May and posted on their AICR Facebook pages, celebrated this day with morning tea and recognised their hard working front line Receptionists.



Receptionists day 2016 included in Estonia lots of cake and flowers.

# Amir Ben Hansour

## UAE

A

mong the most anticipated events of the year is – of course – our ROTY. However this year was something

special for us – a mixture of new and old, tradition and innovation...

Let's start with the traditions. As usual we opened the competition for three rounds. As usual we agreed to accept 36 participants. And as usual we were hosted by Media One for the first round. It is a comforting feeling to return to friends and loyal supporters of our chapter to launch a new year of ROTY.

Among the changes this year was our focus on communicating through our Facebook page before any emails are sent out throughout the competition and the support from the regional hotel magazine *HotelierMiddleEast*. The senior editor Devina supported us in posting an article prior to the event inviting participants to apply as well as accompanied us during the celebration event.

We started the first round with 36 candidates split into two groups on the 17th September. With us during this day was our regular photographer Luca Lombardi. He got amazing shots of all candidates as well "secret" behind-the-scenes images and entertaining snapshots. Whilst the judging went on, all candidate's photos were uploaded on our Facebook page and received huge support, praises and wishes from their "fans".

And not long after the last candidate has left the room, we were able to publish the results on our Facebook wall, which peaked to 7350 reaches. The highest ever amount of reaches on our page.

7 days later, the second round was on – and we were keen to find our future finalists. The brand new and



uber-prestigious Palazzo Versace opened its door and their business centre for us exclusively. 14 candidates were up to impress us this day. Where the first round was helpful to get a good first impression of our contestants, in round 2 their creativity and presentation skills were tested. It was sure, on this day we all learnt something new.

At 10pm the same day, we published on our site the 6 finalists. And the speculations started who will be the ONE we are looking for.

And then, two long weeks later, there was this day X – keenly awaited from both, the 6 finalists and the entire chapter. As in recent years, Jumeirah Zabeel Saray offered us two of their meeting rooms for the final. Once more we had great support from our local partners to support the judging committee, consisting of Devina from *HotelierMiddleEast*, Ibrahim from DTCM, Alan from Grand Hyatt, Fernando, GM of the hosting hotel, previous year's winner Louise and AICR UAE president Joachim.

The final consisted of 5 tricky questions as well as the legendary role play, where their patience and sure instincts would not be spared. And we learnt two things this year: Our two actors/actresses are

getting better every year, and, most importantly, who will represent UAE in Paris! It was a strong performance from each candidate and all would have deserved to name themselves best receptionist in town. But – there can only be one.

The next 24 hours were tough for all of us. Nail-biting for the finalists. Sweat and pressure for the committee. But not without a Facebook live feed: the entire (AICR) world should know in real time who is the person to name him- or herself "Best Receptionist of UAE 2016".

And there, Ibrahim from DTCM did the honour to reveal the content of the important envelope. It is... this year... after three intensive rounds... to attend the final in Paris... Amir Ben Amour of Jumeirah Zabeel Saray.

We all remember our first encounter with Amir, when he spoke about his origin, being half Arabic, half German, learning very early the values of hospitality through his mother's invitations to cater for friends and family at their home – his genuine and personal way to describe his passion and interest for hospitably made a lasting impression.

Paris – brace yourself – we are coming to win. In Friendship.

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# Omar Jeddoubi

## Morocco



### Venue

- CESAR Hotel Marrakech
- Thank you very much for Mr Ayadi the Owner

### Participants.

#### Candidates from:

- Es Saadi HOTEL
- Es Saadi Palace
- AMANJENA Hotel
- Cesar Hotel
- Kenzi Palace Hotel
- Adam Park Hotel.

### Jury

- Association President
- Hotel CESAR GM
- Member from the bureau
- Guest from the Hotel
- Hotel School Director.



# Christina Yeo

## Singapore

W

Wanting to create lasting impressions through interacting with guests since my younger days, I decided to kick-start my career with the

hospitality industry. Through my daily interactions with guests, I have gained much insight, experience, knowledge and most essentially, unforgettable memories.

Before working at The Ritz-Carlton Millenia Singapore, I worked at another hotel/service apartment known as The Ascott Raffles Place. Over at The Ascott, that was where I got my first opportunity in the hospitality industry and where I took started taking baby steps to where I got today. Being in a small hotel/service apartment with only 168 rooms, I was able to get closer and spend more time with my guest, knowing about their lives and being a part of it too. It fed my curiosity and passion for hospitality as I just love communicating and learning from people that I interact with.

Then The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore came calling. With much encouragement from my family and managers to encourage me to try something different and challenge myself further, I took the leap forward and joined an international brand powerhouse, renowned for their service excellence and their motto, where ladies and gentlemen serve ladies and gentlemen.

My work and efforts on a consistent basis brought the attention of my superiors, who chose me to represent the hotel to compete for The Alcatel-Lucent Challenge Trophy Hotel Receptionist of the Year 2015. Naturally, I never expected myself to get through to the Finals of this prestigious competition. When I did, my mentors told me something I would never forget. 'Never stop learning, no matter what age you are at, wherever you are. When you do, it's the end of your progression' Then came the Finals, and although I put in efforts to enrich myself in the knowledge of the hospitality in different forms, finance, concierge, hotel management,



it was always something new, something different, there was always so much more to learn. Winning the competition was at the back of my mind as I was indulging myself in the wonderful experience and journey thus far. They say, if you are enjoying what you do, you will never be working for another day in your life.

The Finals soon came and the unexpected just happened, a fairytale beginning. Although coming from a prestigious brand, I never expected to get through to the Finals, much less a favorite to win it. When the announcements were made, I broke down, literally. That night, put my career on the

fast track. I was promoted to Front Desk Supervisor and within a year, I am currently training as a Manager On Duty.

I then represented Singapore to take part in the AICR International, David Campbell Receptionist of the Year competition in Vienna in January 2016, a place where I made many international friends and had an unforgettable 4 nights in Vienna. Even today, the words of my mentors stood in my mind, 'Keep your feet on the ground, never forget where you came from. You are only as successful as your humility' Humbling words and those I hold dear to my heart always.





# Ottavia Polloni

## Switzerland

F

or its 22nd edition, **Ottavia Polloni**, from Four Seasons Hôtel des Bergues, won the Bucherer Trophy for the best young receptionist

2016. The competition took place in the luxurious Schweizerhof Hotel Bern on November 25th and 26th, 2016. Organized by the Swiss section of the Amicale Internationale des Chefs de Réception et Sous-Directeurs des Grands Hôtels (AICR), 15 receptionists from renown Hotels across the country competed for the trophy, and get the opportunity to represent Switzerland in the International finale competition in Paris in February 2017.

The competition has been very hard this year, and the results were really tight. Ottavia Polloni was the most successful to get through the various challenges. **Ana Dobrosavljevic**, from the Crowne Plaza in Geneva,



was the first runner up, and **Céline Stofer**, from the Schweizerhof Hotel Bern, second runner up. The jury also gave a special prize “coup de Coeur” to **Matthias Yohannes**, from Movenpick Hotel & Casino Geneva, to recognize his amazing ability to stay calm in every situation, which is a great asset when working at the reception.

3 winners Bucherer Trophy 2016 - **Ana, Ottavia, Céline** (left to right)

Below: **Gala dinner** group photo



# Sarah Lena Schwarzacher

## Austria

W

Warm regards from Austria!

The Austrian section is doing well and there is not a single day passing by without

thinking about the wonderful time we had with the AICR family in January 2016.

The Congress was such a special experience for us and we cannot wait to see everyone in Paris.

After the congress we had our General Assembly at the Bristol Hotel, where we added Ms. Vesna Prokic as "Secretary in charge of Social Media" to our AICR committee

The last couple of months, the AICR Austria has had several events at different hotels. We had a great site inspection at the wonderful Sacher Hotel, with drinks at the roof top terrace afterwards. Another event took place at the Guesthouse Vienna, where the AICR got very spoiled as well.

In August our member **Etienne Gruber** went to Germany to join the General Assembly of the German Section, which was a wonderful experience for him and for both sections.

We are very happy, that the AICR Austria counts 45 members and we want to increase the number of members constantly.

Other than that we have had our national Receptionist of the Year Contest on November 14th and are happy to announce **Sarah Lena Schwarzacher** from the Palais Hansen Kempinski as our proud ROTY winner 2016.

We are looking forward to seeing you all in Paris!



Left: ROTY Winner, Sarah Lena Schwarzacher



Below: AICR at General Assembly  
AICR at Harrys Home  
Right: Etienne with AICR Germany



# Katerina Chocholousova

## Czech Republic

T

he year 2016 has been a year of plenty and success, especially for hotels in Prague. In Prague there were again more tourists than during previous years.

Hotels cannot complain about a lack of work. However, during this year some of our members left their jobs in the hotel industry and went to work in another field.

This meant also reducing the number of our members. We are responding to this situation, and we searching for their successors. We invite them to our meetings. We are trying to prepare these meetings so as they are attractive by either program or place.

Year 2016 started very nicely with our participation at the Congress of Vienna in the number of 5 persons. Followed by an informal meeting of our members in representative area of the Municipal House in Prague. Among other things, there was a presentation of product MyStay. Annual meeting in March was very successful. It took place in the north of Bohemia in the famous ski resort of Spindleruv Mlyn in the Clarion Hotel. An interesting program here culminated by our participation at the official ball of the



city. We remembered the summer months, during our meeting at the beer garden of hotel Olsanka in September this year. And there was also an autumn session at the Adria Hotel Prague at the end of October. On November 12, 2016 at the hotel Andel's by Vienna House held a national round of ROTY 2016 with the participation of 14 contestants. The winner of the competition and also a new member of our association became **Katerina Chocholousova** of Hotel Boscolo Prague, Autograph Collection. Fingers crossed for her in Paris 2017. "Good luck Katerina. We are proud of you!"





# Claudio Catano

## Italia

**Fabrizio Vitale**, Aicr Italia President handing in the Trophy for the 2016 winner **Claudio Catano**.



**Fabrizio Vitale**, Aicr Italia President handing in the certificates.



2015 Italia ROTY winner **Mrs Alessandra Dornetto** participated in DCT Vienna.

# Beatriz Pablos

## Spain



T

his year has been one of changes and transition within the Spanish Section. After a number of events, meetings and get-togethers, towards

the end of the year we updated the Spanish Committee in our annual meeting with the naming of Lucia Serrano as our new President; Marisa Vizoso as our new Treasurer; Samuel Gonzalez as the Secretary and Eduardo Gonzalez who was given the title of Vice-President.

The highlight of 2016 was most certainly the annual weekend away discovering new destinations within Spain and promoting the Association in smaller towns throughout the country in an attempt to create exposure for AICR. During this wonderful long weekend, our new Management team was voted in and we are now proud to have Lucia Serrano representing the Association in Spain.

During our trip to the Extremadura Region of Spain, all members were able to enjoy the sights with their families and loved ones. The guided tours of the famous ancient Roman ruins; the Guadalupe Monastery and the lovely food and hospitality received everywhere we visited made the getaway one to remember.

Following the Spanish AICR traditions, the weekend ended with the gala dinner, celebrating the appointment of the new Management Team. Amongst all the members we all shared memories of past DCT Events and planned the build-up to the upcoming Paris Event. We took the opportunity to once again celebrate the success of last year's winner – Sofia Barroso and bets were made as to whether our candidate this year would be just as successful.

In addition to our annual getaway, the other highlight of the year was the



selection of Beatriz Pablos, the Spanish Representative in Paris. The final selection process took place in the recently opened Gran Meliá Palacio de los Duques in Madrid. The finalists were scheduled to undergo the last stage of the selection where they had to face the panel of judges with many nerves, anticipation and hopes for success. They were put through their paces, with interesting and challenging role plays and tricky questions that they breezed through. The judges realized how high the standards are within the Front Desk teams in Spain and after much deliberation, they announced the winner: **Beatriz Pablos**.

In 2017, the Spanish Section hopes to be able to attract a higher quantity of new young

members who will actively collaborate in all Association-related events and actions. The renovated team, coupled with the fact that there are quite a number of new properties opening around the country, specifically in Madrid in the next few years, means that we hope to be able to increase our exposure and numbers to a greater degree than in the past few years. We will be collaborating with our winner, Sofia Barroso to reach out to younger generations with the aim to get them actively involved in a number of events we hope to organize and will update next year!

See you all soon in Paris where we look forward to seeing you again!

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HOTEL SERVICES PROGRAM

# Otto Riie

## Estonia



It all started with the biggest failure in my life! Having failed in my previous field of job I ended up in hospitality. And oh boy, has this been a ride since then.

Started working in a small luxury hotel as a porter in 2011 got me infected with a desire to learn so much more about the industry and has got me to a position of a Front Office Manager in one of the best hotels in Estonia by the end of 2016.

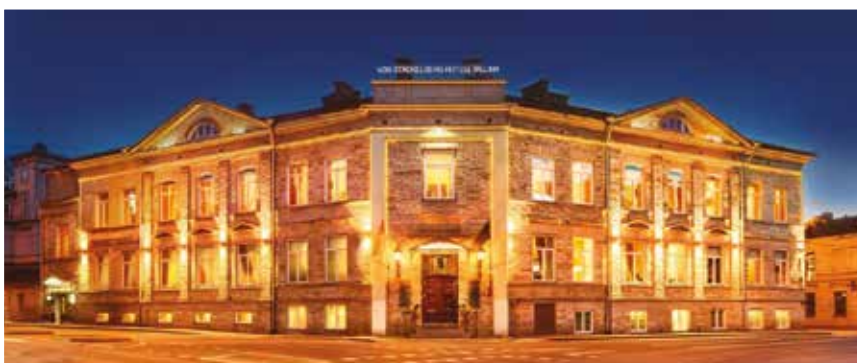
This wouldn't have happened if I had backed out from competing for the trophy of the best receptionist in Estonia and later for the best in the World. Attending the competition for the David Campbell Trophy is still one of the brightest memories in my career.

But all this tells about what is still to come as little as „Once upon a time...“ in a fairytale. So this is only the introduction of what is hopefully going to be a great story of mine...



### **Hilton Tallinn Park Hotel**

Just after the opening in 2016 The Hilton Tallinn Park Hotel became a member of AICR Estonia section.



### **The von Stackelberg Hotel Tallinn**

In late Summer 2016, The von Stackelberg Hotel in Tallinn became a member of AICR Estonia section.



# Ellena Brueckner

## Germany

T

he main focus of our activities in 2016 was to introduce the AICR in different regions within Germany. We introduced regional Meetings in Hamburg, Berlin and Munich. With these events, combined with a site-inspection in the hotels and

a cocktail reception we were able to increase our members in Hamburg and Berlin. In the last quarter 2016 we introduced the AICR round tables also in Munich.

We used these round tables for presentation of our main sponsors (Gold Key Media, Hotelkit) and as a platform for some new potential sponsor partners.

During the International Meeting in Vienna we were very proud of our German candidate. Lily was the 2nd runner up of the Int. "Receptionist of Year" competition.

In August we had our annual members conference. During this meeting we received interesting presentations from our sponsor partners.

Beginning of December the German "Receptionist of the Year 2016" competition took place at the Jumeirah Frankfurt. Again we had so many candidates this year that we had to perform also a pre-selection. During the award dinner we were very happy to welcome our Founder and Honorary Chairman **Gert Prantner**.

With the winner and current "German Receptionist of the Year 2016", **Ellena Brueckner**, from the



Mandarin Oriental Munich, we will join the International Congress in Paris in February 2017. We are looking forward to a great event and keep our fingers crossed for Ellena for the international competition.

In December we had the AICR X-Mas-Reception at the Ritz Carlton Berlin. During this event we have collected a great sum with a raffle and donated the money to a non-profit association for supporting apprenticeships for young people. Our Sponsors were also invited for this event.

We are pleased that we have had such a successful year 2016 for the AICR Germany and we are looking forward positively into the future.



# Priyanka Sharma

## New Zealand

The New Zealand section had a great year in 2016.

We managed to incorporate an extra workshop for the contestants having 3 in total where the receptionists were prepared in grooming standards and presentation, problem resolution and the last one a practice run where some of the candidates had the opportunity to judge other receptionists and see the competition from the other perspective.

We managed as well to be partnered with Dr Harold Hillman, a well know physiologist that has a workshop called "The Authentic Leader". He believes so much in the association that he decided to give us every year one free entry to his seminar for 1 of our members.

This year we decided to send **David Latu** (Rooms Division Manager – Heritage Hotel Auckland)

We as well had Currency Select for the second year as our Sponsor and they participated in the competition as one of our judges.



We had 2 regional competitions (North and South Island) and we found the winners for each section. The person that will be representing New Zealand in 2017 will be **Priyanka Sharma** and the title was passed on by Victoria Hillman who was the winner for 2016.

The New Zealand section will be looking for a new President in March 2017.



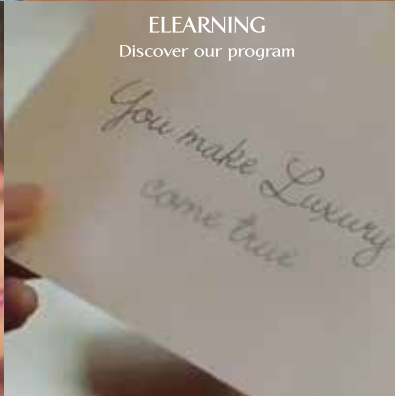
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**GROUPE INSEEC**

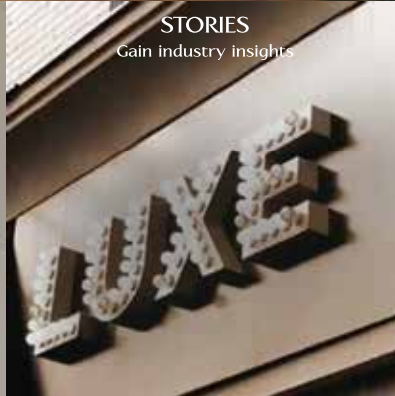
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# Emily Short

## Australia

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big thank you to every single one of you for your contribution and support to the continual growth of AICR Australia, your passion towards guest service, employee engagement and friendship.

In 2017 we will continue to bring all our members together to connect and network. We will have industry guest speakers, conduct site visits of different member hotels, and many more exciting events!.

### Introducing the Winner – Emily Short

It was in an attempt to find interesting after-school work, that Emily started her first hotel job at the age of 15. The 3-star hotel she worked in was poorly run and practically falling apart, but Emily loved the team she worked with and the stream of colourful and memorable guests who would frequent the hotel. Whilst still at high school, Emily worked for a number of small local motor inns and serviced apartments and was working for Best Western when she started her Bachelor of Advertising at the University of Canberra.

It wasn't long before she realised this course wasn't for her and it forced her to re-evaluate what she wanted to do with her future. She realised that her passion was for her work and changed her studies appropriately. She started her Advanced Diploma of International Hotel and Resort Management and at the same time began her new position on the front desk at the Crowne Plaza Canberra. The course was a fantastic learning experience and provided many professional opportunities, including an educational trip to Dubai to see some of the best five star hotels in



AICR Receptionist of the Year 2016 judges



2016 Receptionist of the Year Australia Competition was held in Canberra at Hotel Realm hosted by Doma Hotels



AICR Receptionist of the Year 2016 candidates

the world and a five-month professional placement. Emily completed her placement at the award winning InterContinental Sydney, working on one of the busiest front desks in the country.

Emily is now coming to the end of her Advanced Diploma, but is looking forward to further study in business and management in the following years. At present she is working for DOMA Hotels in the Realm Precinct, working across both the Little National Hotel and Brassey Hotel. It is not always easy working between two distinctly different properties, but Emily has always enjoyed a challenge.

Emily cannot wait to compete in the International Receptionist of the Year competition in Paris. She feels it would be an absolute honour to help bring the David Campbell trophy to Australia for the first time.

# Beatrice Gallo

UK

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hugely successful year for the AICR UK with membership levels now the highest they have ever been.

Highly enjoyable monthly events with an average attendance of around 75 to 80 people have led to a great sense of friendship and sharing amongst the members.

August brought another charity bike ride organised by national and international sponsors Gold Key Media, with a handful of members undertaking the 400 mile journey from London to Amsterdam. This joint effort raised nearly £25,000 for Hospitality Action and Children With Cancer.

As this publication goes to print, our Receptionist of the Year competition is well underway. With over 30 applicants being whittled down to just 7 who will compete in the final to produce our national champion.

Last year's victor, Harriet



Henderson, has not only been promoted to Assistant Reception Manager – a great example to set for future candidates, but also helped her team win Front of House Team of the year at the national hotel awards the Hotel Cateys. Well done Harriet!

We are very much looking forward to reuniting with all our friends from other sections in Paris and will hopefully be bringing many familiar faces with us.

## New President AICR UK

Mr Sebastian Knoerr

Sebastian joined the AICR in 2013 and became a member of the committee early last year. He has worked in London Hotels from the age of 18, including 2 ½ years at The Savoy Hotel starting as a Receptionist before their restoration closure in December 2007. Now almost a decade on he is working for The Ritz London as Front Of House Manager.



# £25K raised in charity ride



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ig names in the luxury hotel industry teamed up with Gold Key Media and The AICR Association to raise over £25,000 for Hospitality Action and Children With Cancer UK.

The team of 30 riders and support crew took on the enormous challenge of cycling 400+ miles from London to Amsterdam over the August bank holiday weekend.

Covering the distance in only four days, nine members of the Gold Key Media team, including Managing Director Chris Horn and Venue Sales Director Sally Ingram, were joined by representatives from the AICR Association, the Golden Keys Association and the Housekeepers Association.

Riders included Oliver Milne-Watson from The Beaumont, Paula McMinn from The Savoy, Patrick de la Mar from The Royal Garden, Marie Bellman from The Mandarin Oriental, Harriet Henderson from Gleneagles, Pru Parkes from The Corinthia, Duncan Couper from AICR, Susan Craig from Rapport, Virginia Mayer from Hawksmoor, Burak Ipecki from South Place, Filipe Domingues –

Park Plaza Sherlock Holmes, Ken Moreton from Shortlist Media, Nick Barker from BA and Gethin Thomas from The ABC.

The group were all supported by some of London's biggest names in hospitality including The Lanesborough, The Berkeley, Gleneagles, Red Carnation Hotels, The Ampersand Hotel, The Ritz, The Langham, Belmond Le Manoir, and the luxury watch maker Chris Ward, all of whom donated some superb prizes to help raise money for the two nominated charities.

Chris Horn, Managing Director of Gold Key Media, said: "Our ride to Amsterdam was incredible and the colleagues and friends from the industry that completed the ride share an enormous amount of pride and sense of achievement by raising nearly £25,000 for these two very worthy charities"

Oliver Milne-Watson, President of AICR UK, said: "The AICR UK were absolutely delighted to join forces with the Gold Key Media team on this epic adventure in aid of these wonderful hard working charities. It was a gruelling ride and we had an amazing time en route."

# Agata Szparaga

## Poland

### The first competition for the Best Receptionist of the Year A.I.C.R. Poland



Between 16th and 18th of December 2016 there was a unique event being held at the Radisson Blu Sobieski Hotel Warsaw and Golden Tulip Warsaw Centre. The event was the first Polish edition of the David Campbell Trophy Receptionist of the Year Competition. The competition was a part of the Second National Meeting of the A.I.C.R. Poland (Polish section of the international association of Front Office Managers and Deputy Managers of Luxury hotels).

The National Meeting was held thanks to the support of the A.I.C.R. Poland partners and sponsors: VIP Transport & Concierge Service, WH Performance / Consulting, Hotel Media Group, UPC Business, Salesianer Miettex, Z-Factor and the hosts of the event, Golden Tulip Warsaw Centre and the Radisson Blu Sobieski Hotel Warsaw. Media partner of the association was 'Hotelarz' – the most prominent hospitality magazine in the Polish hospitality market.

The 3-day meeting started with the theoretical part of the ROTY competition – each participant was given 4 open-ended questions to which they had to give a brief, short and coherent response. The answers were later scored by the judging panel and the score was one of the components of the final competition score. After the exam was over, the participants along with the members of the A.I.C.R. Poland had a fabulous time at the dinner with the live music hosted by Golden Tulip Warsaw Centre.

The main part of the II National A.I.C.R. Poland Meeting, took place on 17th of February at the Radisson Blu Sobieski Hotel Warsaw. On that day, the A.I.C.R. Poland members were taking part in the workshops which were held by the partners of the association. First session was held by Z-Factor and featured an overview of the revenue and yield management principles, the second session was carried out by Wojciech Herra and was related to building and maintaining positive teams. At the same time, ROTY candidates had to participate in the role play where they had to show different skills and qualities in the areas like customer focus, problem solving skills, negotiation skills and sales techniques. The ROTY candidates were being scored by a judging panel consisting of 5 persons - the host of the event, the General Manager of the Radisson Blu Sobieski Warsaw – Nick Tsiros, the President A.I.C.R. Poland - Marcin

Branch, as well as Dagmara Plata-Alf - Hotel Media Group - partner of the association, Pawel Kałużny - Director of Training - Rialto Hotel and Adam Latek - The owner of the consulting company Latek Hotels. The day was concluded by the amazing Gala Dinner where the winners were announced. Agata Szparaga from the Solifet Warsaw Hotel was awarded with the 1st prize, there were also 3 other prizes which were presented to the representatives of Bristol Hotel Warsaw, Radisson Blu Sobieski Warsaw and Marriott Warsaw.

We are really pleased that the 1st edition of ROTY competition attracted 18 participants and was such a big success – this gave us a boost of energy to keep it going and make sure that next year's edition will be even better... And thank you all for participating and well done to the winners.





# Creating the Polish AICR Section

It was back in 2000/2001 when I established the Estonian section while I was living and working there. Kristel Viiding became the first Estonian AICR President and ever since we had many great encounters in Tallinn as well as on an international level. And from my many conversations with Estonian members I heard that they were proud to be on the international AICR map, where they made new friends and contacts and even hosted the congress in 2007.

Founding a Polish section was in my mind since I moved to Poland in 2013, but it took time to get to know people and contacts. And Polish people "klik" a bit different (☺) than Estonians. So, it took time.

It was in 2015 that our company spread its wings also to Warsaw by sending me there as their Regional Manager. I introduced the AICR briefly to our General Manager at the Sound Garden Hotel and asked him whether he would know if the AICR spirit would be of Polish interest. And he confirmed luckily! My second question was if he would know somebody I could contact and who would have the drive to establish a Polish section? And after a few moments he said: "Speak to Marcin Galatzka, our Operations Manager at the hotel". So I did, and Marcin was enthusiastic from the first moment on, pulled his strings, asked around in other hotels and then he joined me at the AICR event in Vienna in January 2016.



After our return he invited his Polish friends and colleagues, introduced the idea of a Polish section and off he went! During one of my many trips to Warsaw he invited me as a guest to the founding event at the Sound Garden Hotel and I joined them by telling them a few of my AICR experiences and stories with the AICR.

And from that day on the AICR Poland was born and active!

Michael Stenner

While the second and the third position was taken adequately Pauline snatched from Bristol a Luxury Collection Hotel Warsaw and Khrystyna Kuts the Radisson Blu Sobieski Hotel Warsaw. The winner was Agata asparagus with Sofitel Victoria Warsaw. Congratulations.

Agata graduated from the Warsaw Academy of Physical Education and e-Universidad de Malaga, Spain. He is fluent in English and Spanish. His professional career began at the age of 19, among others, as an intern in the Polish Tourist Organisation, in the roles of the receptionists, catering staff and the booking department. In parallel with passion indulged

a passion for traveling and exploring the world. Always a welcome return to the Spanish Malaga, which in the past had the opportunity to improve their language skills and to work with the organization of various events promoting the city among young tourists.

In November 2015 years Agata took a job as a receptionist at the Sofitel Warsaw Victoria belonging to an international hotel group Accorhotels. Her commitment to responsibilities, high standards of service, friendly attitude and enthusiasm in daily work are key elements that determined the participation in the competition.

In Poland, the competition was

held for the first time but not the last. During Sunday's summary of the reunion, the members unanimously agreed initial term of the competition for November 2017 years. Everyone already strongly welcome and encourage you to follow the trade press, as well as the pages of the association [www.aicrpolska.pl](http://www.aicrpolska.pl) Next year's meeting of the Association are set for the four quarters of 2017, namely - 2 meetings in the first and third quarters in Warsaw, one in the second quarter Sloneczny Zdroj Hotel Medical Spa & Wellness in Busko Zdroj and in the last quarter of the Hotel Mera Spa Hotel Sopot, where he also held a competition for the best front desk clerk Polish 2017.

# AICR Congress - Zurich 2018

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s you are probably already aware, Switzerland will be the destination for the international congress 2018.

The event will be held in Zurich and we are already in the preparation process. Below you will find the members of the international committee and the functions within. We have already launched the Facebook page and the homepage will follow soon.

Of course we need the support of all our members to set the bar in Zurich for all future events.

## AICR Congress 2018 in Zurich (Switzerland) from January 31st to February 4th 2018

Katrin Flurry	General Secretary
Markus Miller	Events
Gabrielle van Uden	Hospitality
Roman Migliorato	Hospitality
Yvonne Ruckstuhl	Finance
Sebastian Hoffmann	Communication
Torsten Magewski	Sponsoring
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