



Mondo - Hotel Once and the professional experience of its general manager Chanwit Modsompong

Dal nostro corrispondente a Bangkok - 18 gen 2023 (Prima Notizia 24) A large and complex facility consisting of a fine Hotel, a rooftop with a breathtaking view, and an adjoining location where catering and entertainment is done, the Ron Ron Slow Bar. All this is managed by a young and very professionally gifted manager with great human values.

As one enters Charoenkrung Road, Soi 72/2, one gets away from the daily and almost incessant hubbub of the artery that runs through Bangkok's China Town, a long stretch of road that allows one to connect the neighborhood called Yaowarat with the area that contains the Front Riverside, a vast area along the Chao Praya River, which is ploughed by boats destined for mini-cruises on the great river that runs through the megalopolis, or the Four Seasons Hotel and other hotel establishments of international scope that reside near there. Hotel Once in Bangkok is more intimate, seeming to deviate from the hubbub outside to seek a more secluded, quieter, more composed space made for relaxation. Hotel Once is overlooked by a bar furnished in the style of the 1970s, neatly neat, large and spacious and finally by a rooftop with a breathtaking view, from which one can see the top of many well-known Bangkok skyscrapers as well as the Chao Praya River where people movers and large river cruise boats flow incessantly and slowly. Soft, refined jazz cheers diners who can enjoy traditional Thai food as well as international dishes, even some very tasty and very Italian pizzas. On the bridge at the helm of this complex facility, which also includes a nearby dining establishment with an attached bar, the Ron Ron Slow Bar, is a quiet-looking, seemingly shy manager. In reality, being manager of such an articulated, large and multifaceted location, certainly puts a strain on anyone's nervous system, as one has to deal with a vast staff, various professional figures, take care of the management of the Hotel, the rooftop with its bar, the adjoining multi-floor split venue, and so on. "In truth, here we are like in a family, fully respecting our own roles and fully indulging the hierarchical scale, we all feel like brothers and sisters, all involved in one work project, this Hotel and related activities, from hotel reception, catering, relaxation, security, hygiene, are experienced as a fundamental part of our work but there is certainly no lack of the spirit of cooperation and our natural way of giving each other a hand." Chanwit Modsompong, the general manager of Hotel Once, speaks in a warm and persuasive voice, explaining how his job comes with great responsibility and is complex but is always based on one important element, the human factor. "Once their roles are clearly established, all staff are fully aware of their skills. This is not a time span of a few days. Assigning a job to staff is the easiest task, yet toughest ever. To set zero before start counting, we took sometimes for a clearer direction that everyone can see the same goal. Not only the finish line that is pointed

out but the race checkpoints along the way where we will run together as well. At the same time, it must be added that as positions and skills are clarified, the work develops along precise lines and always in progression, growth is collective as well as individual. We have no fear of mistakes, we allow staff to explore new things, try somethings different for works and we will not judge any weird ideas, sometimes they incredibly work. The mistakes don't just give us pains but allowing us to develop too. Strategy of our To-do-list is what's not necessary to do. It is a lot easier for staff if we could decide what we will not spend time on it." Hotel Once's general manager, Chanwit Modsompong, is 37 years old: in Italy he would be described as "young," since the Italian job market for jobs and positions similar to his usually sees people of an older age. This is not the case in Thailand, where the job market welcomes the young and very young right from the start and where, at 60, people enter the retirement phase. The manager Chanwit, therefore, is fully mature for his professional position, not surprisingly, he has a great deal of training in academic settings and his training in studies has developed precisely in the direction of "dynamic marketing." A good part of his professional training also took place in Italy, in Milan, to be precise. Now it is better understood why there are also Italian pizzas and dishes on the catering menus at the rooftop and adjoining Ron Ron Slow Bar. Theme for which a broad, bright smile appears on manager Chanwit's face. Hotel Once was built and opened in 2015 but its official opening is dated 2016, along with its roof top. Chanwit Modsompong became its manager in February 2016; the Ron Ron Slow Bar venue opened in Christmas 2021. Why was a classic style of furniture chosen? "Many hotel establishments redesign their interiors according to different styles just as different ownerships or different decorating and styling ideas may alternate. In the case of Hotel Once, a choice was made from the beginning to go with a classic style of furniture because it is a timeless style; you know, classic never dies. The design, the story behind 'Classic' style we chose, it is expressed in the mood of romance, more feminine. Every element is led to romance. We have hosted about 400 wedding events, not because of luck but intention. The rooftop restaurant was intentionally designed to be the wedding venue. And we made out of it, pioneering the small wedding market since no-one-agree to be mainstream nowadays. Through my travels in Europe, for example, especially in Milan, Paris, I have noticed that choosing the classic style allows an environment to be at the same time comfortable, easily recognizable by the clientele, and at the same time overcome the impromptu preferences of the fashion of the moment." Through your management, did you notice any differences in the Hotel Once's user base between the time before Covid and the time after? "The interlude dictated by Covid and the subsequent lockdown imposed to prevent its greater spread was particularly painful and difficult to overcome. There was little money available to maintain the facility and all employees. The restrictions imposed on international tourism entering the country put the entire Tourism industry in Thailand in great difficulty. Today we are at a later stage, we see a gradual return of tourist flows from abroad, which contribute greatly to the national economy and its Budget. Hotel Once's clientele is predominantly Asian, they come from neighboring Nations, predominantly it is a Chinese speaking area, as in the case of Hong Kong but it is a much wider area. Today, in Thailand you see a lot more Indians, to give an example. I personally believe that when the current restrictions on the incoming Chinese community are resolved, the national economy,

especially the Tourism sector, will see a real economic boom." Is there also any difference in the type of clientele between the pre-Covid period and the post-Covid period? "During the lockdown many people locked themselves in their homes because of the restrictions and ordered food through delivering services activated with special apps on their cell phones, watched movies at home through subscriptions to dedicated channels such as Netflix, the home thus became like a protective cave from which it later became difficult to detach. However, when the restrictions were dropped, when it was possible to return to a "normal" life, many continued to experience the transition period to "normalcy" by continuing to detach themselves from life in the outside world. I would like to add that the 'New Normal' doesn't exist for real. It is just 'Normal' itself as we see nowadays but plus a little bit more of 'Equality' understanding that human can learn about. Today, there is a desire to get back together with friends and relatives outside the home, there is a desire to listen to live music, to share relaxation with others, to experience playful moments together as well, entertainment. Man is a social animal. It is his nature. What we are witnessing today is the return -step by step- to a shared social life closer to our way of being together, a more human way, in fact." Hotel Once Bangkok 2074/99 Charoenkrung 72/2Bangkorlaem, Bangkok, 10120, te: +66 (0) 2688 2596 Fax +66 (0) 2688 2599

di Francesco Tortora Mercoledì 18 Gennaio 2023