

June 23, 2020

Hotelier Keith Menin: “I’m a firm believer that you can learn something from all of your mentors and peers, regardless of their industry or stage of life”



Keith Menin is a hospitality entrepreneur, principal of Menin Hospitality, developer of Natiivo Miami in Downtown Miami, and recognized leader in the new generation of hoteliers.

Keith’s expanding portfolio of hotels, restaurants and nightlife destinations pioneers the modern-day preservation of historic properties, providing travelers with new, distinctive experiences. Menin Hospitality’s portfolio of 15 brands spans throughout South Florida and Chicago, offering upscale lodging, lifestyle restaurants and nightlife venues including Gale South Beach, Bodega Taqueria y Tequila and Mondrian South Beach. With roots in Florida’s hotel industry, Miami-born Keith began to learn the fundamentals of a hotelier in his teens tending the front desk of Shelborne South Beach then owned by his uncle and mentor, Russell Galbut. Keith began his career at Crescent Heights where he learned the condo

conversion business. He then went out on his own to develop and complete his first high rise condo called Segovia Towers in Coral Gables.

I'm a firm believer that you can learn something from all of your mentors and peers, regardless of their industry or stage of life. I push myself to regularly engage with my friends and in new industries. Everyone has a different story and different experiences, and those conversations often lead to a fresh perspective. It's refreshing to take time to talk to those around you because oftentimes, you will learn something new or find a different way to solve a problem.

Currently, Keith is developing Natiivo™ Miami — a revolutionary homesharing-friendly development, designed to create a hybrid hospitality and residential experience for owners and travelers alike. The Natiivo™ Miami brand is transforming the “eat, work, live and play” mentality, under Keith’s direction. Within Natiivo™ Miami is also Miami’s first-ever creative office-condos [Creative HQ](#) that gives owners flexibility and the use of Natiivo™’s exclusive members-only concept called Natiivo™ Social. Natiivo™ Social consists of three floors of curated amenities, including a resort pool

with pool-side cabanas, outdoor terraces, state-of-the-art fitness center, restaurant and cocktail bar, outdoor dining, entertainment spaces, media room, programmed events, speakeasy, DJ booth, Peloton studio, yoga, and more.

Thank you so much for joining us! Can you tell us a story about what brought you to this specific career path?

When I was very young, my uncle, Russell Galbut, purchased the Shelbourne Hotel which became our family hotel. I have wonderful memories from growing up at the Shelbourne and these experiences sparked my passion for the hotel industry. I started my career at the age of 16, and quickly realized my passion for making people happy through hospitality. This has always been in my DNA and I consider myself very fortunate to have discovered it at such a young age.

Can you tell us a story about the hard times that you faced when you first started your journey?

This business is all about understanding the ins and outs of the industry and learning from your own mistakes. Upon graduating from the Cornell School of Hotel Administration, I had the idea of turning a small boutique hotel on James Avenue that my family owned, into the Sanctuary Hotel. I was beyond excited and at the time, I thought I knew it all. I quickly learned that was not the case. I ended up essentially blowing past the budget — and fast.

My pride made it difficult to tell my family I had caused this major problem. I regrouped, composed myself and was able to turn this negative into a positive. I pivoted and transitioned the building into a condo-hotel, which turned out to be one of the most successful condo-hotels in South Florida. I sold out the building for \$1,200 per square foot, recouped our investment and kept the asset and front desk operation.

Taking on this project at such a young age allowed me to experience failure firsthand but in the same token, it taught me tenacity and problem solving. It wasn't a quick or easy process but I persevered and this ended up being one of the biggest learning experiences of my career.

Where did you get the drive to continue even though things were so hard?

I've always had a very strong drive to be successful and make money, instilled in me by my Uncle Russell. Growing up, I quickly understood his ambition and work ethic were unrivaled. Even when he achieved success, he constantly looked toward the next goal, which taught me to charge ahead, even when things get tough. Remaining relentlessly focused on the end goal helps me look past temporary obstacles and find the motivation to keep going.

If you could go back in time and talk to your younger self regarding life lessons, things you would like her to know what would they be and why?

Looking back on my experiences, I wouldn't necessarily change a thing. However, if I were doing this all again, I would tell myself that time is perishable and special. I would say "go slow and put a pen to paper first; it's always cheaper than brick and mortar." I would remind myself to focus on big deals because they typically take just as much time as the small deals. Each move requires the same technique, whether you're building 20 units or 200. I would encourage myself to take the risks you might not feel you're ready for because those are often the times when change and success takes place.

What do you think makes your company stand out? Can you share a story?

I'm the principal of Menin Hospitality, and am currently developing Natiivo Miami through my family company, the Galbut Family Office. The most unique thing about Natiivo is that it's truly the first hybrid hospitality/residential product built for homesharing in Miami. People use homesharing websites all the time when booking vacations, but it's a gamble. Additionally, the condos and homes on these platforms lack the resort-style amenities so many people desire when traveling.



At Natiivo, we've created a strong condo/hospitality niche where both residents and travelers have access to an incredible amenities platform. We've fully embraced homesharing. Natiivo Miami owners can live in their units year-round or rent their residences on any homesharing platform. Our goal is to create a product that's truly open and powered by the people.

Natiivo Miami also has an amazing for-sale, creative office space within the building called Creative HQ, as well as 70,000 square feet of amenity space and social club called Natiivo Social. For me, Natiivo is really exciting because it combines residential, hospitality, homesharing and food and beverage — all in one 51-story-tower. My experience with residential development combined with my knowledge of the hotel/hospitality industry create the perfect storm for something special: a true 2.0 development.

Which tips would you recommend to your colleagues in your industry to help them to thrive and not “burn out”?

In this industry, reminding yourself of what you're passionate about and why is imperative to avoid burnout. For me, it's hospitality. I'm a big fan of change and feel it should be embraced whenever possible in order for growth.

Separately, I'm a firm believer that you can learn something from all of your mentors and peers, regardless of their industry or stage of life. I push myself to regularly engage with my friends and in new industries. Everyone has a different story and different experiences, and those conversations often lead to a fresh perspective. It's refreshing to take time to talk to those around you because oftentimes, you will learn something new or find a different way to solve a problem.

None of us are able to achieve success without some help along the way. Is there a particular person who you are grateful towards who helped get you to where you are? Can you share a story?

Instantly, I think of my uncle, Russell Galbut. He has played a huge role, not only in my career but in my personal life. In addition to being a great mentor and boss, he's also been a father figure to me and has helped mold me into the person I am today, as a husband to my wife and father to my children. Being able to watch him do business has been invaluable. He motivated me and taught me the ins and outs of the hospitality industry. At the same time, he let me learn from my own mistakes which allowed me to become independent and ultimately, more successful. He has always been there for me with guidance but also pushed me to find my own solutions, which was an





incredibly rewarding way to learn about the business. Russell is really the power behind Natiivo Miami. I'm carrying out this project the way he would because everything I've learned in the industry is in gratitude to his guidance.

How have you used your success to bring goodness to the world?

Giving back and bringing goodness to the world is incredibly important to me and I try to prioritize it whenever possible. As a Miami native, I frequently donate to charities that benefit the city and make a local impact. I also work closely with Cornell, my alma mater, to guide students who are also interested in the hospitality industry. My Uncle Russell was an important mentor to me when I was learning about the industry and invested his time in teaching me about the business, so that is something I try to pay forward by engaging with students at Cornell and interns at Menin Hospitality. Taking the time to have meaningful conversations with people can have a strong impact on their professional development and make a big difference.

Can you tell us more about your latest ventures? In your opinion, how they are addressing the future needs of the of hospitality, residential and office space?

Natiivo Miami is the first building that is designed, built and licensed for homesharing and is a revolutionary concept and is a hybrid between a hotel and residential experience that allows people to feel like locals wherever they travel. Miami has a vibrant energy and strong identity as a city, so we incorporated Miami's strong culture into the design of Natiivo Miami to create something that promotes social connection and is authentic to the native environment of South Florida.

Creative HQ is Miami's first-ever creative office condo and is located on the fifth through eighth floors of Natiivo Miami. These office-condos will be delivered tenant ready and fully-finished in order to provide the ultimate office experience. Creative HQ is designed with open floorplans, advanced technology, and ultra-high-speed internet access. The traditional office model has become obsolete and Creative HQ is at the forefront of the changing office environment. Now, the focus is on social interaction and creating a healthy corporate culture, and Creative HQ does just that. Creative HQ owners and tenants will have access to all that Natiivo Miami has to offer. The project is one-stop-shop with flexible office space, entertainment, restaurants, fitness center, hotel, and residential space, all in one building.

Can you share a little bit about this Natiivo Social concept?



THRIVE GLOBAL

Natiivo Social is an integral part of Natiivo Miami and we're looking forward to seeing this concept thrive in Downtown Miami. It's an exclusive club that spans three floors and 70,000 square feet featuring dynamic restaurant offerings, co-working spaces, a pool and a variety of other entertainment and fitness programs. Natiivo Social is highly exclusive, available only to guests and residents of Natiivo Miami and tenants of Creative HQ along with a limited number of outside memberships. Prominent hospitality group LDV Hospitality will be curating the food and beverage experiences along with the conceptual design and entertainment programming and it's been wonderful to work with a company with such an established reputation. Downtown Miami is an optimal location to launch Natiivo Social and Natiivo Miami because it truly is a flourishing area of Miami. I grew up in Miami and have witnessed Downtown's continuing evolution and have seen it become a flourishing hub for business, dining and entertainment. Natiivo Miami is expected to be completed in 2022 and will be centrally located in Downtown and just steps from the Miami WorldCenter masterplan and I could not imagine a more ideal location for this project.

How can our readers follow you on social media?

[@keithmenin](#)

[@nativomiami](#)