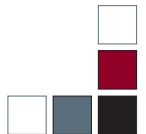


## Marlies Head – A Hostess out of Family Tradition

»I took on responsibility and learned to lend a helping hand at an early age,« says Marlies Head, Owner of the Madison Hotel Hamburg, about herself. She has always felt at home in gastronomy. Her parents ran a small restaurant and grocery store in Harkebrügge where she and her siblings proudly helped in the family business. After all, it was much more fun than playing with dolls in a miniature grocery store. What began far away from the city, has become an exemplary hotelier's career in the heart of Hamburg.

Marlies Head, née Block, finished her education as a Hotelfachfrau (Hotel Business Expert) at the hotel Schloss Wilkinghege near Münster. Afterwards she set out into the wide world where, for over a total of eight years, she gathered impressions and gained experience in international hotelery and gastronomy. Her stops included among others Switzerland, France and the United States. After returning to Germany, she and her brother Eugen Block built up Block House, a restaurant chain modeled on American steakhouses. In order to optimize the service and professionally train employees, she founded Head College, the management school for gastronomy.

After 20 years of success as a Managing Director of the Block House Restaurants, she started looking around for a new challenge and decided to realize her own idea of a hotel in Hamburg. Her concept: a hotel that combines casual luxury and the comfort of a First-Class-Hotel with the exclusive functionality of serviced apartments to meet every demand. Her co-investors were convinced by her execution skills and so gave her free rein. She didn't shy away from the entrepreneurial risk: »The success of a hotel depends solely on having the right concept – and naturally on its meticulous implementation by expert management.«



Star architect Prof. Bernhard Winking designed the building and interior designer Max Flum saw to the inside. Marlies Head's dream hotel was not only planned to be beautiful but practical as well. Being a perfectionist, she did the most obvious thing to ensure the level of quality she demands: She literally moved into the model room she designed, testing materials, furnishings and their arrangement. Wall paper as well as tiles were torn out many a time and the furniture was exchanged and rearranged until the apartment finally met her requirements. The result is the Madison Style: No-frills design made of high-quality materials, exclusive and at the same time functional.

The Madison reached top capacity utilization right from the beginning. After five successful years a special honor was bestowed upon the hotel: Marlies Head was presented the award »Hotelier of the Year« by the renowned publisher Deutsche Fachverlag. Her recipe for success: »You can't rest on your laurels. You have to continuously put your guests' wishes and needs first.« At lunch you can find her in »Marley's« restaurant, not dining at a table, but actively serving her guests. What she does by example is what she also expects of her 84 employees: Making each guest's stay as pleasant as possible and supporting every colleague.

Since the hotel opening, Owner Marlies Head had also been Director of the Madison, before, in summer 2009, she appointed her former deputy Thomas Kleinertz as her successor. »Our young, skilled team now has young management. And I am looking forward to devoting more time to my private life and improving my golf handicap,« declared Marlies Head, who will of course continue to actively accompany the team and her Madison Hotel.

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