

**In focus: The Nile Ritz-Carlton, Cairo**

**Research:** Ahmad Gilani, Haroon Azhar

**Interview:** Afrah Mohammad

**Editor:** Noreen Nusrat

General Information:

<b>Hotel Established</b>	2015
Number of Rooms	229 rooms including 49 suites
Total Customer Reviews	21,112
Positive Customer Reviews	Approximately 85%
Average Rating	8.5 out of 10.0

Guest Rating:

<b>Feature</b>	<b>Rating</b>
Staff	8.8
Comfort	9.0
Facilities	8.7
Free WiFi	8.1
Value for Money	7.6
Cleanliness	8.9
Location	9.2

In an exclusive interview with CustomerService.ae, Joe Ghayad, General Manager at The Nile Ritz Carlton in Cairo talks about how the hotel is home to genuine care and comfort. He also speaks about the focus on guest engagement to create memorable experiences, extensive staff training programs that are in place and many unique features offered by the hotel such as the 3D immersive dining experience.

The interview was conducted by Afrah Mohammad, edited by Noreen Nusrat and relevant research was carried out by Haroon Azhar & Ahmad Gilani.

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## Interview Transcript

### **Q: Tell us a bit about Ritz Carlton and what sets you apart from your competitors in the hospitality sector?**

Joe: When we speak about the Ritz-Carlton as a brand, we automatically see 100 years of history unfolding before our eyes. It is a brand with an unshakeable credo and corporate philosophy of unwavering commitment to service, both in our hotels and in our communities.

One of our core beliefs lies in our Ladies and Gentlemen being the most valuable resource in our service commitment to our guests. As our motto says, we are “Ladies and Gentlemen serving Ladies and Gentlemen” at every Ritz-Carlton.

With such rich history and class, the brand sets itself apart from any competition globally being home to genuine care and comfort. We aspire to create #RcMemories wherever our guests go and thrive to make every Ritz-Carlton guest, a guest for life.

In Cairo, our property is one with authenticity and grandeur, if I may call it “La Grande Dame, du Caire”.

It upholds its legacy and the city’s ancient history while located in the heart of the Nile. The Nile Ritz-Carlton embraces a distinctive location from which you can marvel at Cairo’s Skyline featuring the Cairo Tower, Nile River and Opera House from one side and the remarkable Egyptian Museum from another. It is an iconic property where boundless luxury meets unmatched views and intuitive service.

**Q: Can you highlight some of the facilities and amenities that you provide which enhance the guest experience?**

Joe: The Nile Ritz-Carlton marries the “bucket-list” city with world-class services; offering splendid amenities including more than nine distinctive restaurants and bars among which is our Italian haven, Vivo with views of the Nile, two laid-back bars redefining the classics, a rooftop lounge showcasing the city called Nox, an oriental restaurant with a backdrop of the Egyptian Museum and more.

We are also home to the lavish Nile Ritz-Carlton Spa, a well-equipped gym with views of the Nile, the largest outdoor pool in downtown and magnificent cabanas overlooking it for a one-day use.

Being where an elegant past meets the modern present, we recently introduced a 3D immersive dining experience called “The Banquet of Hoshena” in partnership with “Dinner Time Story”. The show has enchanted people around the world in Dubai, USA, Zurich, London, Germany and Riyadh, to name a few, and is here for the first time in Egypt. It is an illusionary feast for the senses; using cutting-edge 3D visual technology, experiential props and effective storytelling through flavors, ingredients, sights and sounds. During the experience, guests enjoy a 6-course set menu surrounded by talking plates, flying dishes, magic mirrors and misty adventures! It is important to mention that we do have a Genting Casino, the best in Cairo.

**Q: What is your philosophy when it comes to ensuring customer happiness?**

Joe: Creating guests for life is what we, as Ladies and Gentlemen of The Nile Ritz-Carlton, thrive to achieve every single day. The essence of our job is to enliven the senses and fulfill even the unexpressed wishes and needs of our guests. With that being top of mind, we ensure customer happiness and satisfaction through guest engagement and communication. The more we engage with our guests staying with us, the more we are able to anticipate their needs and leave them with memorable experiences.

**Q: Do you offer any loyalty programs or discount packages for your customers?**

Joe: Being part of Marriott International, one of the most powerful hospitality chains in the world, we reward our guests for their loyalty with our Marriott Bonvoy program. Marriott Bonvoy gifts its members benefits in over 30 hotel brands and 7000+ properties. Once you enroll, you can instantly enjoy exclusive member rates, mobile check-in and mobile key access, points collection and more. As you advance with your membership tier, you can enjoy up to 75% bonus points on stays, late check-outs, lounge access, room upgrades and much more.

**Q: What feedback mechanisms do you have in place and how do you deal with negative feedback from your guests?**

Joe: Hearing back from our guests is a valuable privilege that guides us through our journey in hospitality, triggering changes and influencing innovations to our product and service. To open a channel of communication with our guests, we constantly try to engage with them throughout their stay. We also do have in place Marriott Guest Voice and GXP systems that alert our Ladies and Gentlemen about any guest feedback for immediate action where needed. We deal with all feedback with care, attention to detail and above all appreciation that our

guest has taken the time to let us know how his experience was, giving us the chance to constantly evolve and improve.

**Q: Do you offer online customer support on your digital platforms and is this support 24/7?**

Joe: Of course, understanding the changes in guests' behavior, preferences and trends, we offer a 24-hour support system where you can check-in to your booked room and order room service from your mobile phone. We also make sure to support our guests on social media in a very timely manner.

**Q: How are you incorporating the latest technology to make the customer experience better?**

Joe: At The Nile Ritz-Carlton, Cairo we are constantly looking into new ways to enhance guest experience. For instance, our Marriott Bonvoy members can enjoy mobile check-in, 24/7 support via the membership's online community, placing a room service order via mobile and mobile key room access among many others. Also, keeping up with the trend, our conference spaces and meeting rooms support virtual and hybrid meetings in a luxurious, well-equipped setting.

**Q: Do you have any staff training programs in place and what key soft skills do you focus on?**

Joe: In the belief that our Ladies and Gentlemen are our most important resource in delivering our service commitment to our guests, we spare no effort to constantly develop them and prepare them for their next step. We inherit this core belief from Marriott International, being a people-first company. With such a philosophy, we provide training

programs that are focused on service, guest journey, leadership, communication, and many more, all of which are accessible via our Marriott global platform.

**Q: How do you plan on making customer experience better in the future?**

Joe: Enhancing customer experience remains the only constant in our dynamic world of hospitality. It is genuinely our shared daily goal to create a memorable experience for every guest who enters the hotel. With that in mind, our Ladies and Gentlemen are constantly empowered and encouraged to do all they can to provide personalized service that is tailor-made, especially for every guest's need and unexpressed wishes. We are here to engage and create Ritz-Carlton Guests, for life.

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## **About Joe Ghayad**

Joe has a wealth of experience in hospitality with over 23 years at The Ritz-Carlton Company where he climbed his career ladder until he made it as the General Manager of The Nile Ritz-Carlton, Cairo. He was listed as one of the 'Power 100 General Managers in the Middle East' and has been awarded several prestigious Marriott awards recognizing his leadership and excellence.

## References

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