



# hotel inspector



We're not letting up when it comes to bringing you the biggest and the brightest brands around the planet.

InterContinental Hotels Group PLC (IHG) is a multinational company which operates several instantly recognisable hotel brands.

It is the largest hotel company by number of rooms – some 621,696 as of March 2009. And that means this is an operation that virtually all of us will experienced at very close quarters.

The Group can be traced all the way back to 1777 when William Bass established the Bass Brewery in Burton-upon-Trent. In 1876 their red triangle trademark was the first registered in the United Kingdom.

In 1989, the British Government limited the number of pubs brewers could directly own, so Bass diversified into the hotel business. In 1990, they purchased Holiday Inn International from Kemmons Wilson, expanding themselves into North America.

The InterContinental brand began in 1946 as part of Pan American Airways under Juan Trippe, when the first hotel opened in Belem, Brazil. In 1981, holding company InterContinental Hotels Corporation was sold to the UK-based company Grand Metropolitan. As GrandMet focused its core business and expanded into fast food through the purchase of Burger King, ICH was sold to fund the restructure in 1988 to Japanese based Saison Group.







them, so, at the end of the day, they should have some input.

‘There is often this tendency – and certainly this was true in Windsor because that is how it had grown up – that the people in cellular offices tend to get the benefit of the daylight, whilst everyone in open plan tends to be stuffed into the middle. We tried to steer away from that, and we have a lot of offices that are inboard here. We have placed the offices around the core and the open plan spaces towards the outside.’

Located in 13 acres of landscaped grounds, the open-plan space is set in an impressive four-storey building. Taking advantage of the picturesque surroundings, a patio area, complete with broadband coverage, enables the staff here to work outdoors as well as throughout the smart new HQ.

The project team, as well as gaining plenty of staff opinion, has also spent a great deal of time, effort and money on the fit-out of the space and the quality of the facilities available to staff and visitors alike. ‘This marries up with the HR exercise,’ Adrian tells us. ‘We have provided fantastic facilities here – this is a great place to work, and therefore people are going to make that extra effort to come over here; we have a fantastic restaurant, a marketing suite, the gym and dance studio, a meeting suite...this is an amazingly appealing place to work.’

▶▶▶▶ would attract anyone big enough to take the whole building.’

‘Ironically, it was empty for eight years and then two companies showed interest in it at the same time,’ Adrian adds, ‘so we ended up fighting for it.’

‘In terms of location, it is excellent,’ David confirms. ‘It is unfortunate that some people found the journey difficult, although, as ever, many other people benefited from the move because they live closer to here.’

‘There was quite a significant amount of work done by our HR department to make

the move as seamless as possible, and a lot of effort has gone into making everything extremely comfortable for our people.’

This included walking tours of the space, information points, presentations, shuttle buses laid on for staff whose journey was compromised by the move, and even the development of route planning aids. ‘We had a good go at getting people as involved as possible with how the office would look,’ David tells us. ‘For example, we got lots of chair options in here and then got people to score the chairs – what they sit on all day is one of the most important things to



## case study



‘The main thing that people have missed,’ admits David, ‘is the ability to walk into Windsor. One of the things we have tried to do to mitigate that – as well as providing great services here – is to run a shuttle bus into Uxbridge at lunchtimes. Uxbridge might not be as pleasant as Windsor, but there’s not a lot we can do about that!’

There is little doubt that this is an extremely generous facility, which is now a working home to approaching 400. ‘When you consider the typical space allocation that we deal with on a day-to-day basis, we would be looking at 1:110 sq ft per person or so,’ Adrian calculates. ‘Here we’re looking at almost double that – but then there are some fantastic facilities that you would certainly not find in the majority of offices. When we first spoke with David, he told us that, on the ground floor – and he was quite specific – he wanted 12,000 sq ft of kitchen, restaurant and gym, and on the other side he wanted 12,000 sq ft of hotel rooms as a marketing suite.’

The restaurant is indeed a major showpiece of this development and is based on the Crowne Plaza brand quality. This is no staff canteen or café. This is most definitely a restaurant, with the Group’s own skills and qualities being brought to the fore.

Other features include fully functional sample rooms, relevant to the different hotel brands IHG operates, such as Holiday Inn and Staybridge Suites. These rooms have a dual purpose, providing both a showcase facility for visitors and also providing overnight accommodation for visiting IHG staff when required. A Green Room has been developed, where new products and fittings are tested, before being rolled out across the seven hotel brands IHG operates. Furthermore, a 20-room meeting suite has also been created here at Denham, and, as we have now come to expect, is fitted-out to the highest of specs. It is here and throughout the clean open plan working spaces that Morgan Lovell’s office design expertise really comes to the fore.

David reveals that, although Windsor did have a staff gym, it was relatively dark and unappealing. The fitness suite at Denham includes a well-equipped gym containing the latest machinery and a dance studio complete with full-length mirrors and sound system. Furthermore, the space overlooks the immaculate landscaped gardens and benefits from plenty of natural light.

The building also had to be as sustainable as possible and demonstrate best practice, serving as a benchmark for IHG’s hotels and other offices. The work at Denham will

now influence future IHG fit-outs and, we are told, ideas from this project are already being introduced into the Middle East and Singapore. Now that’s a sure sign of success.

And, would you believe it, we haven’t even enough space to talk about the subtle, sleek IHG branding throughout the building. Not much of a brand issue is it? ●

## essential ingredients

<b>Client:</b>	• InterContinental Hotels Group
<b>Design &amp; Planning:</b>	• Morgan Lovell 020 7734 4466
<b>M&amp;E Consultant:</b>	• Bancroft 020 8709 2500
<b>Systems Furniture &amp; Storage:</b>	• Techo 020 7430 2882
<b>Carpets:</b>	• Milliken 01942 612846 InterfaceFLOR 08705 304030
<b>Task Seating:</b>	• Humanscale 020 7566 7990
<b>Loose Furniture:</b>	• Orangebox 020 7837 9922
<b>Hard Flooring:</b>	• Forbo 01592 643777