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## SAN DIEGO HOTELS

### San Diego Hotel Concierges Aim to Please

*Where to stay for top service in San Diego (Video)*

By Maggie Espinosa • Wed, Mar 16th, 2011

Like the Marines, concierges accomplish more by 9 a.m. than most people do in a day. Draconian measures are taken, catering to guests' every whim - itineraries, reservations, airline boarding passes, flower deliveries, stripper poles, cat séances, gift purchases, and the list goes on. People pleasers by nature, they garner a sense of pride by helping others.

An elite group of hotel concierges named Les Clefs d'Or (pronounced lay clay door) are hospitality's excellence. French for "keys of gold," the worldwide organization started in Paris in 1937. Members satisfy stringent prerequisites such as obtaining sponsorship, letters of recommendation, five years working in guest service (three as a concierge), and anonymous test calls. Perseverance pays off in prestige, networking with affiliates, and a higher salary. More than 650 Les Clefs d'Or in the USA represent over 250 four- and five-star properties. In Europe the field is largely dominated by males. America sees the inverse with 70 percent women, 30 percent men. Whether a concierge wears golden keys or not, the common thread uniting concierges is service to their guests. Here are a few San Diego concierge's stories.

#### **Hyatt Regency Mission Bay Spa & Marina**

1441 Quivira Road

San Diego, CA 92109

(619) 224-1234

One of the younger concierges, Cecilia Carlsson is not striving for Les Clefs d'Or. While many concierges consider their position a career, Carlsson views it as a stepping stone for getting into hospitality management. Her professional path started as front desk receptionist, and hopefully culminates in the human resource department. Carlsson views concierge as a great place to start because she must learn how to communicate well, multi-task, and "read" each guest to best advise them. Even when the desk is swarming with tourists, she must remain calm. Tips boost her hourly wage, as well as commission from car rentals and tour companies. Invitations to local restaurants and theater productions is a definite perk, and must be attended -- in the name of research. Tough job.