

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**



**VIRGIN HOTELS ANNOUNCES NEW VICE PRESIDENT OF FOOD & BEVERAGE  
Jay Wetzel to lead culinary initiatives for the hotel brand**

**MIAMI (February 1, 2017)** -- [Virgin Hotels](#), the lifestyle hotel brand by Richard Branson, welcomes Jay Wetzel as the new Vice President of Food + Beverage. Wetzel will oversee the overall direction of food & beverage for the company, working on the various restaurant and bar concepts within the hotels while strengthening culinary partnerships across the brand.

“What interested me about Virgin Hotels is the innate power of the brand,” remarked Wetzel. “It’s a chance to be a part of a team that develops something from the ground up, one that will really have an impact on the hotel industry within my lifetime. I’m looking forward to working with a passionate team that has diverse repertoires in hospitality.”

Wetzel brings more than 20 years of experience as a chef and culinary executive to the Virgin Hotels team. Most recently, he worked as the senior corporate director of food & beverage at Rosewood Hotel Group, overseeing both food & beverage operations and project-related developments for the brand. Wetzel has also served as an executive chef with Hyatt International.

Raul Leal, CEO of Virgin Hotels, commented, “The food and beverage experience at Virgin Hotels is a key component of our overall offering. Through our signature concept, the Commons Club, we intend to deliver enticing experiences by top culinary talent across the country. We are thrilled to have an individual of Jay's qualifications on board with broad culinary experience both domestic and international.”

Virgin Hotels Chicago opened in January 2015 and is currently taking reservations. Virgin Hotels recently announced plans to open additional properties in New Orleans, Silicon Valley, Nashville, and Palm Springs. Hotels in Dallas and New York City are currently under construction, slated to open in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

**About Virgin Hotels:**

Virgin Hotels is a lifestyle hospitality brand that combines heartfelt service, straightforward value and a seamless, personalized hotel experience with the track record of innovation and smart disruption that Sir Richard Branson’s global Virgin Group has pioneered for over 40 years. Each property will intermix a passion for food and beverage with music and culture, fusing with the local landscape and providing a vibrant and inclusive environment for travelers and locals alike. Virgin Hotels Chicago, which was named the “#1 Hotel in United States” by Conde Nast Traveler’s Readers’ Choice Awards 2016. Virgin Hotels Chicago is now open and accepting reservations at [virginhotels.com](#), with Nashville, Dallas, Palm

Springs, New Orleans, New York, Silicon Valley, and others to follow. Virgin Hotels continues to explore hotel and office conversions as well as ground-up development in cities such as Boston, Los Angeles, Miami, Austin, Seattle, San Francisco, Washington DC, and London.

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For more information:

Amanda Caskey, The Door // 646.340.1723 // [amanda@thedoeronline.com](mailto:amanda@thedoeronline.com)