



AT YOUR SERVICE

Nothing is impossible when you have a luxury concierge service that provides personalised services for a fee. The man who makes things happen, **Concetto Marletta**, chats with **Scott Adams** on the key to his success

WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING EXACTLY WHAT you want without having to lift a finger, luxury concierge company Indispensable is the answer, and the man behind providing the global magic is savvy London-based Sicilian Concetto Marletta.

“The basis of my service comes from my long established contacts who can open doors to provide people with exactly what they want,” explains Marletta. Last year, before the World Cup in South Africa, a gentleman who was desperate to get tickets to some of the key football matches which had been sold out months before, called Marletta. A few days later, the football aficionado was delighted to discover that everything had been taken care of, from the private jet, to the luxury villa complete with butler, chef, 24-hour security and of course the coveted tickets to the big games.

It all started some 20 years ago, when the debonair

Italian was working in London's five star hotel Claridges in Mayfair. His work opened his eyes to the world of über-luxury and brought him into contact with many high-profile personalities — multinational CEOs, stars of film, music, opera and theatre as well as members of royal and aristocratic families. In an amusing anecdote, he tells how, while working at Claridges, one of Europe's queens was staying at the hotel. After her departure for the airport, Marletta was phoned by her esquire. The royal had left something extremely important in the suite she had been occupying. Not wanting to raise the alarm, Marletta went personally to investigate, thinking that perhaps some valuable jewels had been left behind in the safe. The precious item, a plate of sandwiches with the queen's favourite filling which she hoped to enjoy during her flight home, was delivered to the plane before it departed.

Marletta's personal qualities of sincere warmth, discretion and professionalism, are well appreciated. He makes his clients' time in the hotel so hassle free. The extraordinary talent of the then 26-year-old Italian was recognised and he was made the guest relations manager.

Through his work, looking after the requirements of discerning guests, Marletta began to compile the information which would go on to become one of the most envied black books anywhere in the world -- contacts for the best tables at exclusive restaurants, hard to get opera tickets, access to private jets and direct line to people who could really make doors open.

When he was transferred in 1998 to the Mandarin Oriental hotel on Hyde Park in London, many of his clients moved with him so as not to lose his services. The very same happened when he took up his present position at The Dorchester in Mayfair. "Some guests have been following me happily from hotel to hotel for some 20 years," he says.

Marletta tells the anecdote of one high-profile client and his fiancé who were soon to be married. Desperate to find the perfect pre-nuptial gift for his beloved, he conferred with Marletta. The client had already lavished his wife-to-be with a sports car, diamonds, designer dresses and much more, and couldn't image what he could give her next. Marletta worked his magic. Knowing that the young lady adored Versace's *haute couture*, he subsequently presented his client with two front row money-can't-buy tickets to the designer's

catwalk show in Milan.

The concept of luxury for many people is changing, observes Marletta who used to get many requests for very showy experiences. "Today people are looking for a place where they can relax, away from crowds and perhaps get spiritual," he explains. "I've sent clients to places including secret islands, where they can unwind or do personalised yoga or meditation courses."

In 2010, after seven years as head of client relations at The Dorchester, the Sicilian thought of exploring other opportunities. "My work was not just about my clients and The Dorchester anymore," he remarks, "it was also about their families, friends and colleagues." But his employer The Dorchester presented an unusual offer. As a compromise Marletta now spreads his time between being head of client relations at The Dorchester and running his own business, Indispensable.

Marletta thrives on what others think impossible. Recently, one of Europe's wealthiest men was keen to attend the by-invitation-only Academy Awards ceremony in Los Angeles with his wife. Getting the invitations and

finding a suite in Los Angeles required him to extend himself and work almost 24/7. "The studios book out all the best hotels 12 months in advance," he explains. As always, he found accommodation and two invitations for his clients

so that they would be able to live this magical moment.

Marletta has been busy. In late 2010, a Middle Eastern royal couple asked Marletta to organise the wedding of their daughter. Marletta was stunned. "This is of course a massive job, but I love a challenge," he says. He will need to make arrangements for the three-day engagement party and particularly all the clothes that the bride-to-be and her fiancé will wear. "I'm looking at using about 10 *haute couture* designers from around the world for the various dresses and ensembles," he confides.

"The young lady has requested that all her outfits be never-seen-before pieces — not even on a catwalk." The wedding, which is scheduled for later this year will also require clothing arrangements for the bridal party, a spectacular wedding dress and a multitude of personal touches for the ceremony and post-nuptial celebrations, a cruise and the honeymoon. Will Marletta be able to come up with the goods? Of course! To date he has never disappointed a client. ■

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"Many young people who I helped out years ago, with quite simple things, are still with me today. They have moved to greater heights and now have more sophisticated needs"