

## **Luxury Institute Survey:** **Wealthy Americans Rate Ritz-Carlton, Peninsula, Small Luxury Hotels of the World and Four Seasons the Most Prestigious Luxury Hotel Brands in 2006**

NEW YORK--(BUSINESS WIRE)--April 10, 2006--Ritz-Carlton edged out Peninsula as the most prestigious luxury brand hotel in the 2006 Luxury Brand Status Index survey of Luxury Hotels conducted by the New York City-based Luxury Institute. Small Luxury Hotels of the World placed a strong third despite its low awareness, tied with Four Seasons. The Luxury Institute surveyed a nationally representative sample of more than 500 households with a minimum of \$200,000 in gross annual income and a minimum net worth of \$750,000 (including home equity).

Wealthy customers rated 19 of the leading Luxury Hotels brands based on their perceptions of critical brand reputation metrics. These brands included (alphabetical order): Crillon, Fairmont, Four Seasons, Inter-Continental, Le Meridien, Leading Hotels of the World, Loews, Mandarin Oriental, Orient Express, Park Hyatt, Peninsula, Regent, Ritz-Carlton, RockResorts, Rosewood, Small Luxury Hotels of the World, St. Regis, W Hotels, and Waldorf Astoria Collection.

"According to our survey of wealthy consumers, the Luxury Hotel industry is the category that delivers the best product, the best customer service, and is the innovative and most trusted of any luxury category," said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the Luxury Institute. "To be perceived by the discerning wealthy as the most prestigious brand in the most competitive of luxury categories a brand must earn its stripes continuously."

Just like in the Olympics, Ritz-Carlton edged out the toughest of competitors, Peninsula, in a category of truly exceptional brands. This was the second consecutive year that Ritz-Carlton was rated best in its category by wealthy consumers. In this year's survey, Ritz was rated highest in superior quality and in making the customer feel special across the customer experience.

"At a time when many brands claim to offer their customers luxury, it is very gratifying to see that the truly discerning and sophisticated traveler rates The Ritz-Carlton brand as their number one choice. They recognize that true luxury is, first and foremost, about exceptional levels of guest service, being delivered each and every time, by our ladies and gentlemen around the world," said Simon F. Cooper, president and chief operating officer.

"In today's transparent marketing world, shareholders no longer own the brand," said Pedraza. "Customers and prospects own the brand. Shareholders only own the bricks and mortar. Our uniquely objective and independent surveys are designed to help luxury firms to measure performance directly from the voice of the wealthy consumer. Truly customer-centric luxury hotel executives will listen and adapt."

### About the Luxury Institute

The Luxury Institute is the uniquely independent and objective research institution that is the trusted voice of America's wealthy. The Institute provides a portfolio of proprietary publications and research that guide and educate high net-worth individuals and the companies that cater to them on leading edge trends, wealthy consumer rankings and ratings of luxury brands, and best practices. Publications include the monthly Wealth Report, the Luxury Brand Status Index surveys, the Luxury Best Practices surveys and the Luxury Consumer Experience Index surveys. To reach the Luxury institute, please call 646-792-2669 or go to [www.luxuryinstitute.com](http://www.luxuryinstitute.com).