



Hospitality Finance, Revenue and IT Professionals

**BAHA Moving Forward**

## **NEWS**

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### **Top award winning UK Hotelier elected President of HOSPA**

One of the UK hospitality industry's most respected and successful hoteliers has been elected President of HOSPA (Hospitality Professionals Association for Finance, Revenue Management and IT) – the new name, officially launched today, for BAHA (British Association of Hospitality Accountants).

Robert Cook – Chief Executive of Malmaison and Hotel du Vin Hotels and recipient of *Caterer & Hotelkeeper's* prestigious Catey award for 'Manager of the Year' in 2006 – has been elected by the HOSPA Council to replace outgoing President David Cook, who has been BAHA President since 2004. David Cook – who prior to his retirement in 2006, was Chief Executive of CHE Hotel Group – has relinquished his post with BAHA to concentrate on his charity work.

Commenting on his election as HOSPA President, Robert Cook said: "I am delighted to have been elected as the very first President of HOSPA following the Association's name change and evolution from BAHA. I am immensely proud and honoured to have been chosen to lead this prestigious and influential Association at such a momentous time in its history, and look forward to nurturing its aims and objectives. The future success of British hospitality lies in the growth of real talent – people are the very lifeblood of our hotels; and HOSPA's highly regarded Education and Training Programmes, together with its events and workshops, play a vitally important role in helping hospitality finance, revenue management and IT professionals become even more effective in achieving success for their businesses."

BAHA Chief Executive Carl Weldon said: "We are delighted that Robert Cook, who officially takes office today (19 September), has been elected President of HOSPA. There can be few more successful, forward thinking and dedicated professionals in

the UK hospitality industry than Robert; and HOSPA's rapidly growing membership will be able to benefit from Robert's invaluable leadership and experience at this exciting time of change for the Association.

"Whilst the election of Robert Cook is extremely exciting for the future of HOSPA, there is also obvious sadness at saying goodbye to a truly great servant to the Association in David Cook (no relation to Robert). He joined BAHA only two years after the Association's formation in 1969, as member number 54! Sixteen years later, he became a Fellow and soon moved up the BAHA ladder. In 1992, David was elected to the BAHA Council, where for two years he chaired the Meetings Committee before being elected in 1994 as BAHA Chairman – a post he held until 2004 when he was elected BAHA President. In December 2008, it gave us all great pleasure at the Association to present David with a special BAHA Lifetime Achievement award for outstanding service to hospitality industry financial management – only ever awarded twice before. We offer David our deepest thanks for all he has done for BAHA in the past and wish him the very best for the future."

During David Cook's time as BAHA Chairman then President, the Association has grown in many ways and achieved a number of important landmarks. Some of the many highlights include the Association's involvement with the Uniform System of Accounts 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> editions; two successful conferences in Birmingham, followed by the birth in 2006 of the highly successful BAHA Annual Conference and IT Exhibition; the redesign of the BAHA Educational programme and achieving the landmark of exemptions from the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA), as well as accreditation from CIMA and the Open University; the Strategic Partnership in 2007 with BAHA's US counterpart – Texas-based HFTP (Hospitality Finance and Technology Professionals); and last year, the formation of the BAHA Hospitality Revenue Management Community.

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**Pictured:**

**Robert Cook, HOSPA President, and Chief Executive of Malmaison and Hotel du Vin Hotels**

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## Notes to Editors

### 1. Biography of Robert Cook, HOSPA President and Chief Executive of Malmaison and Hotel du Vin Hotels.

Robert Cook began his distinguished career as a graduate of Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen; and in 2007, he was honoured with an honorary doctorate in recognition of his contribution to the hotel industry.

Prior to rejoining Malmaison as Chief Executive six years ago, Robert spent three years in Monte Carlo as Managing Director of the Columbus and Dakota Hotel Group. In his first term with Malmaison, he spent four years in the group – firstly as General Manager of Newcastle and Manchester and then as Operating Director, prior to the company being sold to Patriot Hospitality of America. Before entering the world of lifestyle and contemporary hotels, Robert spent six years with Intercontinental Hotels and was part of the pre-opening team at The Balmoral Hotel in Edinburgh when it was re-launched in 1991.

In 2006, he was awarded the *Caterer & Hotelkeeper's* prestigious Catey for 'Manager of the Year' and, in the same year, Malmaison was awarded AA Hotel Group of the Year. In 2009, Hotel du Vin won the same award and for the sixth consecutive year received 'The Guardian Observer Business Travel Award'.

### 2. About HOSPA ('Hospitality Professionals Association' for Finance, Revenue Management and IT) – BAHA moving forward

HOSPA is a non-profit educational organisation which has evolved from BAHA (British Association of Hospitality Accountants) which was formed in 1969. The aim of HOSPA is to bring together those hospitality industry professionals involved in Financial Management, Revenue Management and IT. Whereas BAHA has been recognised as the UK's authoritative voice in the hospitality industry on financial management, technical accounting issues, taxation, and hotel valuation, HOSPA now is additionally the leading arena for debate on hotel systems and Revenue Management topics through their annual Conference and meetings programmes. The membership has expanded to almost 1,000 members. HOSPA, which provides industry specific hospitality focused qualifications in Financial Management and IT, is currently developing a similar qualification for Revenue Management. For more information, visit: [www.baha-uk.org](http://www.baha-uk.org); and from 3 October 2011: [www.hospa.org](http://www.hospa.org)

### 3. Background to decision to change from BAHA to HOSPA

Following a specially convened BAHA Extraordinary General Meeting in May 2011, BAHA members overwhelmingly voted and approved the name change to 'HOSPA' – the Hospitality Professionals Association. The new name is accompanied by a flexible strap-line that defines the membership – comprising the three HOSPA Communities for Finance, Revenue Management and IT professionals. On 19 September 2011, HOSPA was formally launched in London, as was the new name for its highly acclaimed Annual Conference and IT Exhibition which is now known as 'HOSPACE' (HOSPA plus CE for Conference and Exhibition). 'HOSPACE 2011' is to be held on 24 November at the Sofitel Hotel, London Heathrow at Terminal 5.

HOSPA Chairman Paul Dukes explained why the then BAHA Council took the decision to give the Association a new identity. "Finance in the UK hospitality industry has changed markedly since BAHA was formed over 40 years ago," he said. "It is not only the sector that has changed, but also the way it functions – from the emergence of IT in hotel management, guest services, administration, and guest-room technology, to raising finance and the new approach to maximising room revenues – to name but a few examples. BAHA has developed accordingly – continually seeking to provide cutting-edge knowledge; and greater opportunities for personal development, education, meetings, debates and special events for its membership, helping them to enhance skills, networking and employment potential. In 2009, recognising the increasing inter-dependence of finance, revenue management and IT professionals, the then BAHA Council and members took the decision to enable revenue management and IT professionals to become full members of BAHA. Already this has had a positive impact on our membership, as highlighted at the highly successful 2010 BAHA Annual Conference and IT Exhibition which attracted a record attendance. Now, the Association would like to encourage much wider membership and professional opportunities for all; and the BAHA Council believes that the change in the Association's name to 'HOSPA' – together with a new distinctive logo and flexible strap-line – will more accurately reflect our rapidly growing membership and their professionalism within the hospitality industry."