

Bentleys, Beluga Caviar and Marble Bathrooms

Interview with Nicole Ebner and Thorsten Jordan, Joint Heads of VIP Services & Protocol at Fraport

The result of two years of construction and the investment of an eight-digit euro sum, the additional VIP lounge that was recently inaugurated in Frankfurt Airport's Terminal 1 clearly sets new standards. Spanning 1300 square meters of floor space, it boasts amenities that attain the standard of a five-star hotel. Here guests can count on having all of their wishes met with absolute discretion in an exclusive ambiance. The new lounge is Frankfurt Airport's answer to the burgeoning demand for VIP services. Over the next year, Fraport, the airport's operator, expects to host up to 260 guests per day. In this interview, Nicole Ebner and Thorsen Jordan, who jointly head VIP Services & Protocol at Fraport, talk about the new VIP lounge and its features.

What does the new VIP lounge offer, and what is so special about it?

Nicole Ebner: One unique thing is that guests can freely choose between spending time in privacy or in the company of others. There are eight private suites of different sizes, because many of our guests attach great importance to absolute discretion. Celebrities can get to and from their suites completely unnoticed by others if they wish. More gregarious guests can spend time in a club lounge with bar, a smoking bar, or a gaming area. There is also a conference lounge that is ideal for delegations and business meetings.

What stands out in how the facilities are equipped and decorated?

Thorsten Jordan: Only top-quality materials have been used for the interiors. The walls are mostly covered with fabric, and all of the bathroom fixtures are made of marble. With everything from toys for children to footbaths and bathtubs, and even including table soccer and a cigar lounge, our VIP services ensure a thoroughly exclusive, relaxed and pleasant travel experience. The emphasis is on warm colors, fabrics and artworks, which helps us achieve our declared goal of providing as much exclusive privacy, comfort and relaxation as possible at in the middle of one of the world's foremost transportation hubs.

Who visits the VIP lounges and takes advantage of their services?

Nicole Ebner: About half of our clients are from Europe, with guests from Germany accounting for the lion's share. The rest hail mainly from the Persian Gulf, CIS countries, China and the United States. We refer to Los Angeles as a "trunk route", meaning a particularly popular one, especially with Hollywood stars. The breakdown at any given time depends on which major events are happening around the world. If there is a big film festival, we naturally receive more well-known actors. During sporting competitions we get an influx of professional

athletes. And the annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, for example, brings a crowd of top business leaders our way. High-ranking diplomats naturally also account for a large share of our guests; after Berlin, Frankfurt has more foreign diplomatic missions than any other German city. This is partly because of the airport, which facilitates diplomatic relationships with the whole world.

What kinds of entertainment are available?

Thorsten Jordan: Every suite naturally has a TV set, a range of magazines from different countries, and selected picture books. High-speed Wi-Fi is available throughout the lounge. We also have a gaming lounge with game consoles, table soccer and a classic pinball machine. Guests are also free to go out into the terminal and do some shopping. Those who prefer to do it more intimately in their suites can have products brought to them. And for guests who just want to relax, we're also happy to serve them snacks and drinks, including popular combinations like white sausage with wheat beer. Fresh tap beer is available at our bar, and whisky and cigars in the cigar lounge.

What food is available?

Nicole Ebner: Food is prepared fresh every day. Specialty items, including Qiandao and Beluga caviar, are available for guests to order and enjoy in cooperation with our retail partners. A sought-after item is the camel's milk chocolate we offer. Our Asian guests love traditional German cuisine.

Have you had any animals as guests?

Thorsten Jordan: We have already had many animal celebrities as guests. Everything from animals of rare species being transported in cooperation with major zoos to canines accompanying Cesar Millan, the famous dog behaviorist.

Would you like to share any anecdotes?

Nicole Ebner: Not long ago we had a well-known rock band that sang one of its songs on the bridge with some of our staff, which greatly amused the passengers waiting at the gate. We have one frequent guest, a member of a European royal family, who absolutely loves the lentil soup that one of our cooks prepares. He can naturally count on it every time he visits. A famous It-Girl once made friends with a young lady who was doing an internship here. After we introduced them to one another, they spent the whole time together, taking selfies and so on.

Can you provide some concrete examples of your personalized service, exclusivity and discretion?

Thorsten Jordan: It starts when they arrive at the airport. VIP guests can choose a vehicle from our fleet of limousines of all major makes, even including a

Bentley Mulsanne. From an exclusive shielded driveway, they are taken to the airport building and welcomed by a personal assistant. They pass through a special security checkpoint and all formalities are handled for them while they relax in the lounge—they don't have to bother about anything. The personal assistant checks them in, obtains and attaches the baggage tags and drops off their suitcases. He or she is then naturally also available to meet all of their other wishes, in keeping with our motto: "FRA VIP Services—Your Personal Luxury."