

## etc.venues goes global!

Contemporary city centre event space host **etc.venues** is to expand into the United States and beyond in a new partnership with US investor Gencom and Benchmark, a global hospitality company. The collaboration will spur the global expansion of Benchmark and etc.venues in urban and destination sites in both Europe and the US.

Alastair Stewart, Managing Director of **etc.venues**, says: *“In just 10 years we’ve grown almost five-fold and with the backing of UK private equity funds far exceeded our own expectations. It’s given us the confidence to now take our venue model to a broader stage. We’ve long been planning expansion into the US and this new partnership with Gencom and Benchmark will now make that happen.”*

*“Benchmark CEO Alex Cabañas and I have been talking for years, and we’re both delighted that etc.venues will now have the financial, sales & marketing and operational support it needs to establish new venues in the US, while Benchmark is now better positioned to pursue hotel management business in Europe.”*

According to Cabañas: *“The combination of hospitality and award-winning workplace services, spanning three continents and focused on hotel and office real estate investments, is truly unique in the industry. Benchmark’s leadership in delivering exceptional meeting experiences aligns perfectly with etc.venues’ sophisticated meetings and events space in the UK market.”*

Investment was led by Benchmark’s capital partner, Gencom, and a new investor, Colony NorthStar, offering a global platform of capital and real estate expertise to grow both businesses.

*“Culturally, operationally and sales & marketing-wise, Benchmark and etc.venues are a perfect fit,”* concludes Alex Cabañas.

Several important trends in travel and real estate have influenced this new partnership. Consumer preferences are trending towards experiential travel, on demand services/amenities, and shared/collaborative spaces. This mixed-use platform aims to attract real estate owners and managers looking for a diverse-portfolio one-stop-shop operator. Conference planners and potential hotel owners will welcome many new options and advantages as a result.

The etc.venues management team continues to expand in London too, with plans already underway for new locations in the London portfolio. *“Our continued mission to create memorable, talking-point corporate events is well and truly alive and flourishing. We remain committed to offering a new style of niche venue positioned between the established hotels and co-working office groups”,* says Stewart.

*“Growth Capital Partners have been an excellent UK investor for us and helped us treble the size of the business in five years. The nature of private equity is that investments normally have a lifespan and securing new investment in the US allows us to focus on our next stage of growth and innovation. It’s very exciting for us.”*

etc.venues Press release 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018

**etc.venues** is a leading provider of city centre non-residential venues. It has 15 UK venues and specialises in the conference, meetings, training & events market, hosting 750,000 delegates a year at 17,000 events in over 250 rooms. In 2017 it opened 68,000sqft of conference and event space at London's iconic, listed riverside venue County Hall, and opened its first Manchester venue.

**Gencom** is a Miami based investment firm that owns, operates and develops property around the world, with an emphasis on luxury hotels, resorts and branded residential properties; and is also an active owner of/and investor in hospitality operating platforms.

**BENCHMARK**, headquartered in Houston, Texas is a trailblazer in the development, management, marketing and owner-advisory services of resorts, hotels, conference centers and exclusive private clubs. etc.venues will join a suite of Benchmark hospitality services brands: Benchmark Resorts & Hotels, Gemstone Collection, Benchmark Conference Centers and the Benchmark Owner Advisory Group. The partnership means that Benchmark will now operate across three continents, with a total of 80 properties in North America, the Caribbean, Japan and the United Kingdom.

For more information call Diane Jones on 020 7105 6083 or email [djones@etcvenues.co.uk](mailto:djones@etcvenues.co.uk) , or Alastair Stewart on 07768 744 865 or email [astewart@etcvenues.co.uk](mailto:astewart@etcvenues.co.uk)