

Hotelier Middle East

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A definitive guide to successful hotel & catering management ~ July 2005

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Emirates Towers and Chopard tie up to introduce first ladies-only service

Emirates Towers Hotel in Dubai launched a dedicated ladies-only floor at the end of May. The five-star hotel claims to have identified a niche market, as more and more female business travellers choose to undertake overseas business trips on their own.

Situated on the 40th floor of the Emirates Towers Hotel, featuring 10 Tower Rooms and one Apex Suite, the ladies-only floor has been launched in association with luxury amenities provider, Chopard, and is believed to be the first initiative of its kind in the region.

"Industry reports have shown that the number of female executives travelling alone has increased considerably, which creates a very attractive niche for hotels," said Doris Greif, general manager of Emirates Towers. "We introduced this concept on a trial basis to our guests and the response was tremendous, which certainly indicates there is a need for such a concept within the Middle East."

Within its first month of operation, the floor reported 100% occupancy on all nights, a business trend Greif is confident will continue.

Serviced only by female staff, including colleagues from departments such as engineering, security and room service, the Chopard ladies floor offers privacy and comfort for lady travellers.

Due to the architecture of Emirates Towers there is no dedicated check-in area but the front desk staff escorts female guests to their rooms.

"Whilst we do not have a separate entrance to the floor, once landing on level 40 of the hotel, there are additional glass doors which only open with the room keys configured for the ladies floor and no unwanted visitors can access any other areas other than the lift landing itself," Greif told *Hotelier Middle East*.

Amenities provided by Chopard include bathing products, cosmetics and

a cosmetics fridge, fragrances and la make-up accessories.

Guests to the Chopard ladies floor greeted by original flower arrangements and turn down fragrances such as Omir, Casran and Infiniment Chopard room facilities include a yoga mat instructional DVD, Chopard bath products and towels, all of which are custom-made for this joint venture. The duvet and bed linens have been exclusively woven for the ladies floor at Emirates Towers.

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There is a need for such a concept within the Middle East, according to Greif.

Armani and Emaar finally ink hotel deal

The two chairmen of Giorgio Armani S.p.A and Emaar Hotels & Resorts finally signed off on a contractual agreement between their two companies for the development of an international collection of hotels, the Armani Hotels and Resorts.

Following the signing of a Letter of Intent in 2004, Giorgio Armani and Mohamed Ali Alabbar, executed the formal agreement on May 31.

Under the terms of the agreement, Giorgio Armani S.p.A. is awarding a long term license to Emaar Hotel & Resorts LLC for the operation of a collection of luxury hotels and resorts. Emaar will be fully responsible for real estate, construction, management and operations, with Giorgio Armani overseeing all aspects of content, design and style, including interiors and amenities, incorporating the



Mohamed Ali Alabbar and Giorgio Armani after signing the agreement in Milan.

various Armani fashion, furnishings and beauty collections.

"This is a symbolic moment for the collaboration. It signifies that all lights are green for 'go' on what is an ambitious and inspiring undertaking to create an innovative collection of luxury hotels and resorts in the world's most important travel destinations," said Mohamed Ali Alabbar, chairman of Emaar.

The agreement foresees the opening of at least seven hotels and three vacation resorts within the next ten years back by an investment of over US \$1 billion from Emaar. The first hotel is expected open by the first quarter of 2008 and is already under construction as part of Emaar Properties' Burj Dubai development, which, when completed, will be the world's tallest residential and commercial building.

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Dusit opens regional office

Dusit Hotels & Resorts has opened a new regional office in the Middle East. The new Dubai office, located at the World Trade Centre, will focus on building and promoting the group's interests in the region.

Heading the office is Sam-Erik Nuttman, newly appointed regional vice president, Middle East, Dusit Hotels & Resorts.

Rezidor SAS introduces defibrillators

Rezidor SAS Hospitality has collaborated with Medtronic, a medical technology company, to provide Automated External Defibrillators (AED) in each of its hotels across the Rezidor SAS brands in Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

A defibrillator is a medical device that applies an electronic shock to restore regular heart beats. Rezidor SAS is carrying out staff training to ensure that employees are able to react promptly and accurately in any given situation.

Maybourne launches in region

Maybourne Hotel Group, a newly created luxury hotel company with headquarters in Mayfair, London, has earmarked the Middle East as a region for potential development. The group, which owns and manages The Berkeley, Claridge's and The Connaught, is looking at acquiring landmark properties in key gateway cities around the world.

Geraldine McKenna, CEO of Maybourne Hotel Group, along with



senior members from the group, visited Dubai in late May to conduct a regional roadshow and raise awareness for the London properties.

Sheraton Doha begins renovation

Renovation work commenced this month at the Sheraton Doha Hotel & Resort. The 23-year-old hotel, owned by Qatar National Hotels (QNH), is to revamp 99 rooms and suites, renovate the main kitchen and add a brand new spa centre. Work will continue at the property until early 2006.

Movenpick starts Junior Hotel Academy

Hotel managers are getting younger by the minute, especially at the Movenpick Bur Dubai Hotel. The property is undertaking a summer-long Junior Hotel Academy, which will see children aged between six and ten years spending Sunday afternoons learning about the various departments at the property.

The young recruits will be guided through the many departments of the hotel, learning chef's secrets, housekeeping details, and following the general manager's hectic schedule.

"We are not able to do a summer camp, so we thought, 'Why not introduce the hospitality industry to children?'" said hotel general manager, Thomas Tapken.

"We decided to show a little bit of the hotel industry, from back of house where the food is prepared and where the guest sleeps, to checking in and concierge."

Every Sunday afternoon, starting from July 3, groups of 30-50 children will be seen walking through the hotel, wearing the uniform for the department they will be working in.

"They will do what we adults usually do. With each child, there will be one trainer during the afternoon. They will have contact with real customers, and in the evening, the parents will be invited to a gala dinner to see their children serving the meal," Tapken explained.

Naturally, some areas will be out of bounds to the hotel apprentices. A special kitchen area will be locked off, so that the children can prepare food without sharp knives or hot equipment being in reach.

Guests will also be forewarned that the Junior Academy will be taking place, and any guest requests not to be served by the



The Movenpick Junior Hotel Academy was launched at a fun-filled press conference in June.

children will be adhered to. "It is our lowest occupancy period, and a time of year when children need new things to do, and we can incorporate this into our operations," said Tapken.

The Junior Academy will take place every Sunday afternoon from July 3 until August 28. The cost per child is Dhs. 160 (US \$43), which includes a welcome pack and t-shirt, afternoon break, dinner party, graduation certificate, and a photo album on CD ROM.

Each week, the academy will provide an insight into three different areas of hotel operations, including reception, concierge, reservations, and banqueting.

The children will also get the chance to let off some steam with an afternoon aerobics sessions organised by the fitness staff, before preparation begins for the gala dinner and graduation ceremony.

"Switzerland is renowned for being the pioneer in hotel management schools, but unfortunately, a junior hotel academy is still not operational. As the only Swiss hotel in Dubai, it gives us great pleasure to introduce the world of hospitality to our younger guests.

"My own children will take part and I am sure I will be one of many proud parents presenting to my young ones their first ever diploma," Tapken remarked.

Park Hyatt to provide video on demand TV

The soon to open Park Hyatt Dubai is implementing KoolConnect's Imagine video-on-demand solution, with installation and maintenance services provided by Catvision, as the hotel's in-room entertainment provider.

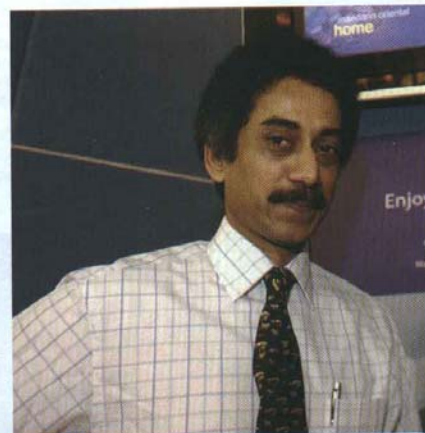
The 225-room resort, located on the bank of the Dubai Creek, will offer guests unlimited movies on demand, 24-hours a day. The Imagine system, currently serving guests in over 5,000 rooms in the US, incorporates video-on-demand, high-speed internet access, virtual concierge services and express checkout. What's more, the television menu and home screen is being specifically customised to fit the look and feel of the hotel.

"Our goal was to outfit Park Hyatt Dubai with the finest amenities available to the hospitality market, then build on that concept by integrating the latest trends in technological innovation," said Pablo Graf, general manager of Park Hyatt Dubai.

"By signing with KoolConnect, guests of Park Hyatt Dubai will enjoy a feature-rich, turnkey in-room entertainment system capable of delivering the highly sophisticated solutions needed for today's business or leisure traveller. We are delighted to be amongst the first to introduce this unique platform to travellers in the UAE and look forward to the convenience and enjoyment it will bring our guests," he added.

In addition to its entertainment services, the Imagine technology enables hoteliers to enhance property marketing programs, build partnerships with local businesses, as well as modify content and deliver hotel promotions via KoolConnect's web-based management system, KoolCentral.

"A high technology platform; backed by quality installation, support and maintenance services, is the driving force behind leading hotels throughout the globe and is crucial for top hotels who aim to meet the demands of their guests on a 24/7 basis."



High technology is now crucial to top hotels, according to Catvision's director, Sudhir Damodaran.

said Sudhir Damodaran, director of Catvision.

"The KoolConnect- Catvision alliance delivers on both these fronts, and when combined with our knowledge of the Middle East market and expertise in providing cable TV services, allows us to continue our tradition of excellence," he added.