

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

It's official: Marriott International is world's largest hotelier

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Starwood's The Luxury Collection is now controlled by Marriott International. Image: Luxury Collection's Hotel Imperial Vienna

By STAFF REPORTS

The merger of Marriott International and Starwood Hotels & Resorts is now complete.

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Marriott acquired Starwood, and all hotels under its umbrella, such as St. Regis and W Hotels, for approximately \$12.2 billion, a deal which formed the largest hotel conglomerate in the world. Marriott's final piece in the puzzle to acquire Starwood fully rested in the hands of the Chinese government's Ministry of Commerce who needed to approve the merger for antitrust purposes before the deal could be truly finalized ([see story](#)).

That's a wrap

With legalese out of the way, the conjoined Marriott International and Starwood Hotels & Resorts will operate as a single company.

By acquisition and its own network of properties, Marriott now operates the most comprehensive portfolio of hotels and resorts. Its global footprint stretches to every viable marketplace and offers consumers various service levels from luxury to affordability, as well as convention venues.

As one company, Marriott will operate or franchise more than 5,700 properties and 1.1 million guest rooms. The hotelier's 30 brands, spanning the moderate to luxury tier, operate in more than 110 countries.

In the Middle East and Asia, for example, Marriott's footprint has more than doubled through its Starwood acquisition.

"Throughout our nearly 90-year history we have never stopped searching for fresh ways to serve our guests," said J.W. Marriott, Jr., executive chairman and chairman of the board of Marriott International, in a statement. "With the addition of Starwood's strong brands, great properties and talented people we have dramatically expanded our ability to provide the best experiences to our customers.

"We also welcome the tremendous responsibility as the world's largest hotel company to be a good global steward, providing new opportunities for our associates and building the economic strength of the communities we call home," he said.

Going forward, Marriott Rewards and Starwood Preferred Guest loyalty programs will become one centralized system. Frequent guests can merge loyalty benefit accounts, sign up for whichever they are not enrolled in and see the point conversions on the members.marriott.com microsite.



Starwood's St. Regis is now controlled by Marriott International. Image: St. Regis Saadiyat Island Resort, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Now that the merger is complete, Starwood will no longer be traded on the New York Stock Exchange. Per Marriott's statement, Starwood shareholders will receive \$21 in cash and .80 cent shares of Marriott.

Also, Marriott's board of directors now includes 14 members instead of 11. The three directors to join include Bruce Duncan, former chairman of the board of Starwood and president, CEO and director of First Industrial Real Estate Trust, Eric Hippeau, a partner at Lerer Hippeau Ventures and Aylwin Lewis, chairman and CEO of Potbelly Corporation. Mr. Hippeau and Mr. Lewis were formerly Starwood board members.

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