

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Marriott seeks leadership in luxury hospitality with expansion

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The W Goa coming in Dec. 2016

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Marriott International is expanding further into the world of luxury hospitality after its merger with Starwood, planning to open 30 new luxury destinations within 2017.

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Now that established luxury brands such as St. Regis and The Ritz-Carlton are under the Marriott umbrella, the hotel conglomerate is hoping to bring that level of luxury guest experience to its existing locations. To support this progress into luxury, Marriott will be opening a wide range of new luxury locations in many different countries in the hopes to appeal to the affluent global traveler.

"We want to ensure that our award-winning brands continue to flourish while safe-guarding the uniqueness and prestige of our luxury brands as we carefully grow them around the globe," said Tina Edmundson, global brand officer at Marriott International. "Our stronghold in luxury is a huge loyalty lure between Marriott Rewards, Ritz-Carlton Rewards and SPG, our members now have more access to more luxury in more destinations.

"Our incomparable data insights and a robust technology back of house' system means we can deliver personalized service in all corners of the world, at any time," she said. "But most of all, we are now able to offer an unrivaled global perspective on luxury in more than 60 countries through eight distinct hotel brands for today's global luxury travelers, whose needs are momentary, dependent on where they are and how they feel."

Making Marriott luxury

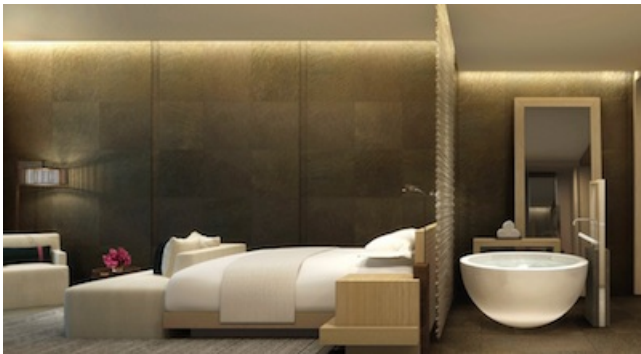
Marriott is launching a series of initiatives to cater to the new affluent customer, who is interested more in experience than anything else. The hotel brand will be launching five new destinations within next year for its newly acquired and iconic St. Regis, such as Shanghai, Changsha and Cairo.



The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort (PRNewsFoto/Marriott International, Inc.)

The latest W Hotel to open will mark the brand's 50th location. Opening up Dec. 12 in Goa, India, W Goa will be the start of 12 new hotel locations for the brand.

Other luxury hotel branches will be rolling out new destinations throughout the New Year such as Edition, the Luxury Collection and JW Marriott. The Luxury Collection will mark its 100th hotel with its upcoming new locations, including an expansion into Cuba.



The Sanya Edition location

Marriott Starwood merger

The merger of Marriott International and Starwood Hotels & Resorts became complete in September.

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 more](#)).

Marriott and Starwood recently attempted to ease the transition of their merger for loyalty customers.

While the merger makes Marriott the largest hotel network in the world, both brands are working to expedite their now single rewards program to eliminate any customer loyalty issues early on ([see more](#)).

"As part of Marriott International, dedicated teams will be put in place to focus on luxury, including operations, sales and finance, to better differentiate and market our incredible luxury brands and hotels," Ms. Edmundson said. "By grouping these brands together under the Marriott International umbrella, we are better positioned to deliver distinct choices to the discerning luxury guest.

"We are fortunate to be able to leverage the experience, tenure and capabilities coming from established luxury brands like The Ritz-Carlton and St. Regis, while also offering more boutique luxury experiences offered by The Luxury Collection and Edition," she said.