

TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

Marriott furthers global luxury expansion with 40 planned openings

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One of Marriott's new hotels opening next year. Image credit: Marriott International

By DANNY PARISI

Marriott International is continuing its growth in the luxury hotel sector by announcing 40 new luxury hotels that will open over the course of 2018.

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The Ritz-Carlton, Luxury Collection and St. Regis are among Marriott's hotel properties that will all get new locations over the next year, with 25 new countries joining the Marriott family. This move is consistent with the larger shift towards more luxury properties that Marriott has taken since its acquisition of Starwood in 2015.

"From former palaces in Venice and Vienna, to skyscrapers in Hong Kong and Dubai, to intimate, remote escapes in the Maldives and Mexico, the breadth of our portfolio is incomparable and allows us to surpass the expectations of our guests around the globe," said Tina Edmundson, global brand officer at Marriott International. "We see luxury as a launch pad for self-actualization, with bucket lists evolving from where you want to go to who you can be.

"With data showing a global shift in perception around luxury, we are uniquely positioned to provide personalized and truly differentiated experiences that resonate with this next-generation jet setter."

Luxury expansion

Since acquiring Starwood in 2015, Marriott International has slowly but steadily been expanding its luxury holdings with a slew of new properties around the world.

Now, the hotel conglomerate has announced 40 new luxury hotels around the world in 2018, with 200 luxury hotels in development for the future in general.

The new hotels will bring in 25 new countries to Marriott's domain, including Nepal, Cuba and the Philippines.



The St. Regis Cairo. Image credit: Marriott International

Marriott claims that the number one priority for luxury travelers is transformative and authentic experiences one might have while traveling to a new place. This data comes from a study the company conducted in collaboration with Skift and is what drove Marriott to this large luxury expansion.

"Today's global luxurian defies traditional stereotypes, moving far beyond the antiquated notion of 'time' being the ultimate luxury," Ms. Edmundson said. "Our guests are on a journey towards personal fulfillment, seeking meaningful and purposeful travel experiences that speak to their inner, idealized selves.

"Whether that be creating a signature dish at The Ritz-Carlton, Grand Cayman's Culinary Studio, prioritizing wellness by tapping into on-demand fitness with JW Marriott's Behind the Barre program, recharging in an over-water villa at The St. Regis Maldives or exploring one of the world's most energetic cities through a W Insider."

Global push

The 40 new hotels that Marriott has announced join a slate of other hotels that the company has had in the works.

The Luxury Collection Hotels & Resorts is going down under for its first property on the Australian island of Tasmania, scheduled to open in 2018.

Located in the heart of Tasmania's capital, Hobart, The Luxury Collection will open The Tasman Hotel in repurposed heritage buildings in Parliament Square following a full-scale renovation. Australia as a whole has become a desirable location for luxury brands due to the country's growing high-net-worth population and comfortable standard of living ([see story](#)).



The Tasman, a Luxury Collection Hotel, Hobart will open in 2018. Image credit: Marriott International

As part of its larger global push, Marriott International and ecommerce giant Alibaba Group are launching a joint venture aimed at creating a seamless global travel experience for Chinese tourists.

The collaboration draws on the partners' expertise and reach, creating a link between their respective loyalty programs while also joining up to run Marriott's store on Alibaba's travel service Fliggy. Over the next five years, Chinese consumers are projected to make 700 million trips abroad, creating potential for travel brands such as

Marriott ([see story](#)).

Through these efforts, Marriott is working to create a more international portfolio of luxury hotels in an attempt to capture the elusive but valuable affluent traveler.

"Access is the new authentic, and our brands are portals to diverse cultures and one-off travel moments," Ms. Edmundson said.

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