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Uma Paro, Uma Ubud join Design Hotels

UMA Paro in Bhutan and Uma Ubud in Bali have joined as Design Hotels.

Both hotels form part of COMO Hotels and Resorts, which also owns the Metropolitan London (a Design Hotels' member since 1993) and the Metropolitan Bangkok, which joined Design Hotels in October.

Design Hotels represents and markets a hand-picked collection of more than 160 hotels in over 40 countries. It offers international representation to member hotels.

What's your star sign hotel?

WORLDHOTELS has taken personal preferences in choosing hotels to a new level. It has introduced what it calls hotel horoscope, pairing an ideal hotel with your Zodiac sign. So Aries' craving for sports challenges and lots of action, it recommends Christmas Mountain Village in Wisconsin, US. Or guests under the Taurus sign, seeking relaxed indulgence in the countryside, it offers Duin & Kruidberg Country Estate in Santpoort, Netherlands.

Check out other fun pairings at the Worldhotels website.

Olympic boost for China aviation

THE Olympic Games this August is set to give China's aviation industry a big boost, said a report.

The Shanghai Daily, quoting information from the General Administration of Civil Aviation, said domestic carriers plan to fly 210 million passengers this year, a 14% jump from a year earlier. Five million overseas visitors and more than 120 million domestic travellers are expected to visit Beijing this year, according to the organisers of the Beijing Olympic Games.

Analysts quoted by the daily predicted that the event would generate revenue of RMB5 billion (US\$689 million) to the domestic aviation industry.

Already in the first three quarters of last year, domestic carriers and airports had earned RMB17 billion in profit, rising 74% from a year earlier.

The report, quoting the CAAC's new head, Li Jiaxiang, said they would not not approve any application for a new airline before 2010 and would also be strict on the introduction of new aircraft.

"We should fully consider the airlines' capability and safety to prevent the industry from overheating," he was quoted saying.

The aviation industry will see a total fixed-asset investment of RMB36 billion this year, against last year's RMB26 billion, according to the regulator.

Royal Plaza gives to charity

A dollar from a buffet meal, S\$2 from a room stay, unredeemed points from its loyalty programme (converted to cash equivalent), 10% from paintings sold - these were some of the ways Royal Plaza on Scotts, Singapore, raised funds for charity last year. The money collected - S\$41,467 - was presented by the hotel's General Manager Patrick Fiat,

to Caryl Loh (pictured) of the Community Chest this week.



Westin debuts in-room spa experience

WESTIN Hotels & Resorts has launched a new in-room spa programme that revolves around a specially designed spa bed.

The all-white spa bed is 31 inches wide.

The experience includes staff delivering a spa basket holding water, a flower, a relaxation music CD, a healthful treat such as dark chocolate and aromatherapy oils.

In Asia Pacific, it is available in Beijing, Shanghai, Sydney, Melbourne, Fiji, Langkawi, Bangkok, Guam, Bali and Auckland.



Westin Guam

Chosun Tourist Hotel now a Ramada

THE Chosun Tourist Hotel, situated in the Suanbo Hot Springs resort area of Chungju, South Korea, will join the Ramada brand following a property wide renovation and expansion.

Currently independent, the hotel will be renamed the Ramada Suanbo Hotel and refurbished



to Ramada brand standards, according to Stephen Young, Wyndham Hotel Group senior vice president, international development, for eastern Asia and Indo China.

The renovation will see two additional floors to add 33 rooms to the 66-room hotel. Construction will begin in the spring and expected to

complete by the third quarter.

"We have six Ramada brand hotels in operation in Korea and three additional

Ramada Hotels signed and targeted to open within the next two years," Young said.

Suanbo Hot Springs in Chungcheongbukdo province is part of a tourist area.

4 Courtyards in Thailand soon

MARRIOTT is opening four Courtyard by Marriott hotels over the next six months in Thailand. This will bring Marriott's portfolio there to 11, with another seven hotels and resorts planned to open through 2010.

Offering a total of 1,078 rooms, the four opening Courtyard properties are the 399-room Courtyard by Marriott Phuket at Patong Beach (opening 2nd quarter), 256-room Courtyard by Marriott Phuket at Surin Beach (1st quarter), 180-room Courtyard by Marriott Phuket at Kamala Beach (2nd quarter) and 243-room Courtyard by Marriott Hua Hin at Cha-Am Beach (2nd quarter).

"All are conversions of existing hotels and are currently undergoing extensive renovations designed to make them appealing to upper-moderate- and lower-upscale-minded travelers who value functionality, safety and comfort," a release said.

"We are really excited about these four hotels," said John Toomey, Marriott's area marketing director for Hong Kong, Macau & Southeast Asia.

"We are also excited by the recent phenomenal growth and popularity of our lodging brands in Thailand," he added.

By the end of 2010, Marriott would have 18 hotels in Thailand under its various brands.