

InterContinental to Develop InterContinental Doha West Bay in Qatar

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InterContinental Hotels & Resorts has signed an agreement with H.E. Mohammed Bin Ajaj Al-Kubaisi to develop InterContinental Doha West Bay in Qatar.

Targeted to open by March 2009, the 60-storey tower will be located in the city center close to both the main shopping precinct and business district.

The 540-room property, which will comprise both hotel rooms and serviced apartments, is the second InterContinental in the Qatari capital and will cater to the rapidly increasing demand from both the intra-regional and international luxury business and conference sectors.

Andy Cosslett, Chief Executive, InterContinental Hotels Group, said, 'Having hosted the Asian Games in 2006 and invested extensively in the tourism sector, Doha has established itself as a key player in the Middle East with a high international profile. The fact that we are developing a second InterContinental in the city is testament to Doha's progression and its ambitious plan to invest US\$15 billion in the tourism infrastructure and increase the number of tourists by 150% by 2010.'

'There are currently 10 further InterContinental properties in the development pipeline across the Middle East and Africa region and with a Holiday Inn hotel also set to open in the city, InterContinental Hotels Group is clearly committed to the expansion of this exciting destination,' continued Cosslett.

H.E. Mohammed Bin Ajaj Al-Kubaisi, who signed the agreement with Cosslett, said, 'We are delighted to partner with InterContinental Hotels Group on this prestigious project and we look forward to creating a market-leading product that exactly meets the demands of the increasingly sophisticated traveler arriving in Doha every day. InterContinental Doha West Bay will stand out as an iconic building in the centre of this thriving city and we're confident it will quickly build a global reputation for excellence.'

InterContinental Doha West Bay will have a state-of-the-art conference center, which is expected to attract corporate and government-related businesses to the city, looking for high-quality meetings, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE) facilities. Doha is also diversifying its product, by pursuing specialized markets such as education and sports-related tourism.

A Club Lounge and business center will be made available to business class guests and the property will also offer luxurious rooms and amenities as standard, focusing on giving guests insider knowledge on Doha, allowing them to discover the best the destination has to offer.

Food and beverage outlets will include an all-day dining restaurant and lounge (seating more than 200 guests) a steak house, and a Sushi and Dim Sum venue. Further restaurants will be located on the 55th and 56th levels.

While a gourmet shop at the lobby level is being specially designed to support Residence Suites guests, a gym, spa and outdoor swimming pool will be integrated into the contemporary hotel design on the 46th floor.

According to the Qatar Tourism Authority, 973,656 visitors arrived in Qatar in 2006, representing a 33.4% increase on the previous year. Supported by large investments in the tourism sector this growth is expected to continue to reach a target of 1.4 million tourists by 2010.

The country's infrastructure is currently undergoing significant development to support this growth with Doha International Airport being expanded and upgraded at the estimated cost of US\$2 billion. Due for completion in 2015, it will be transformed into a state-of-the-art complex, together with twin parallel runways and almost 25 gates, able to simultaneously handle six airbus jet planes. Qatar's national carrier, Qatar Airways, signed a deal in 2005 with Airbus, the European aircraft manufacturer, to purchase 60 A350 jet airliners worth US\$ 0.6 billion. The aim is to treble the fleet to 120 airliners by 2015 and also develop a global cargo service.

InterContinental Hotels & Resorts has just opened its 150th hotel globally at Dubai Festival City and currently has 35 properties and 10,584 rooms in the Middle East and Africa region alone.

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