

## Anantara Resorts to manage two unique five-star resorts in Abu Dhabi, UAE

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### Anantara Resorts Announces Further Development in the Middle East

Anantara, a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World, will manage the boutique Desert Islands Resort & Spa (opening 2008), which will be the centre piece of the unique Sir Bani Yas island experience, as well as the Anantara Qasr Al Sarab retreat (opening 2009), planned for the inspiring Liwa desert in Arabia's Empty Quarter (Rub Al-Khali). The two will be the first Anantara-managed hotels in the emirate.

'Anantara has established an exceptional reputation within Abu Dhabi for the operation of its ultra-deluxe spa at the seven-star Emirates Palace Hotel,' said Mubarak Al Muhairi, managing director, TDIC and director general of the Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority (ADTA). 'It will now bring its internationally-renowned reputation for delivering distinct experiences immersed in culture, heritage and natural beauty to these truly unique resorts.'

'Once again TDIC has delivered on its commitment to engage with world-class partners to deliver unsurpassed hospitality experiences for the most discerning travellers.' The 64-room Desert Islands Resort & Spa, which is scheduled for a soft-opening in the second quarter of next year, will be central to the opening up of Sir Bani Yas, a former Royal eco-resort which lies 8 km off Abu Dhabi's western coastline. Sir Bani Yas is the largest of eight islands which, together with an onshore gate, will ultimately make up the multi-experiential Desert Islands destination.

'Starting the second quarter of this year, guests at the Desert Islands Resort & Spa, will have access to this inspirational island with its unique wildlife herds, including some previously-threatened breeds which were successfully bred in captivity under the directive of the late UAE President and Ruler of Abu Dhabi, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan,' said Lee Tabler, CEO of TDIC.

'Sir Bani Yas has been something of a closely kept secret which will now be attainable by resort guests and a select number of day visitors.' Apart from rooms in the main hotel building, the resort will feature one and two-bedroom chalets, a spa with an inspiring range of locally-influenced and Thai treatments, two swimming pools - one overlooking the vast expanse of the Arabian Gulf - a fitness centre, tennis court and an extensive children's play area. Guests can dine in any one of three restaurants and a delicatessen, relax in the library or shop in the gift boutique. The resort will also attract exclusive incentives business with a choice of three venues - a private dining room, board room and a meeting room.

Hotel guests will have access to the planned Sir Bani Yas Arabian National Park - one of the world's largest island nature reserves - which will have a phased opening from the second quarter of this year.

Designed as an aspirational desert retreat, amid the towering dunes of the Liwa district, the Anantara Qasr Al Sarab, will be just 90 minutes drive from Abu Dhabi International Airport. Fashioned in a style reminiscent of a desert fortress, the resort will be the ultimate in 'get-away' luxury and will also boast a luxury health spa, a conference centre, adjoining excursion and tented villages and a children's playground. It is scheduled to open in 2009.

'Creating a destination experience is at the core of the Anantara philosophy and one that the brand takes seriously,' said Michael Sagild, COO of Minor International, Anantara's holding company. 'All our resorts offer first-class, unobtrusive service, spa facilities and a range of adventure activities associated with their individual locations. Abu Dhabi is a very welcome addition to our highly selective destination portfolio, which currently includes luxury resorts in Thailand, the Maldives and Bali.' Anantara is taken from an ancient Sanskrit word that means 'borderless water', a name chosen for this element's association in many Asian cultures with wealth and good fortune. Inspired by local architecture and sensitive to the indigenous culture, Anantara Resorts are currently located in the seaside town of Hua Hin (220kms south of Bangkok), on Koh Samui in the Gulf of Thailand and in the Golden Triangle in the country's north. In the world-renowned destination of the Maldives, Anantara Resort Maldives is a 30 minute boat ride from the capital Male. The newest member of the Anantara family, Anantara Resort Seminyak, will open at the early of 2008 in this most fashionable district of Bali - the Island of the Gods.

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