

## IHG Announces Tampa Bay Area's First Hotel Indigo

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Downtown St. Petersburg's Heritage Hotel has been purchased by BayStar Hotel Group and is slated to open as Hotel Indigo in early 2009

IHG (InterContinental Hotels Group) [LON: IHG, NYSE:IHG] announced that a Hotel Indigo is coming to St. Petersburg, Fla. (U.S.). The 76-room conversion property will open as a Hotel Indigo in early 2009.

The Hotel Indigo St. Petersburg Downtown-North is a conversion of the Heritage Hotel, which is centrally located in downtown St. Petersburg at 234 Third Ave. North. Just two blocks away from Tampa Bay's marinas and parks, the hotel is within easy walking distance of numerous restaurants and boutiques, an open-air shopping and entertainment plaza featuring a 20-screen movie theater, and a pier with an aquarium. Art galleries and museums, including the Salvador Dali Museum, Florida International Museum, Fine Arts Museum, Museum of History, and the Holocaust Museum are also nearby.

'This is a fantastic spot for a Hotel Indigo,' said George Glover, chairman of BayStar Hotel Group and chair of the Hotel Indigo Task Force for the IAHI, the independent franchisee association of IHG. 'Hotel Indigo properties blend the best of cool boutique hotels with the reliability, efficiency and consistent service standards of a major franchise. With the nearby waterfront parks, the eclectic mix of residences, unique shops and businesses, downtown St. Petersburg has all the right ingredients for a successful Hotel Indigo.'

The Tampa-based BayStar Hotel Group purchased the Heritage Hotel from Parkview Hospitality Corp. of Orlando for an undisclosed price and will invest more than \$3 million to convert it to a Hotel Indigo.

'This property is a wonderful example of our Interpret Indigo design platform,' said Jim Anhut, senior vice president, Franchise Development, the Americas, IHG. 'Historical properties like this provide our owners with the opportunity to reflect the unique character of the surrounding community in the designs of their hotels and preserve the historical significance of the building. The branded boutique style of Hotel Indigo allows us to offer our guests the conveniences of a branded hotel, while still providing a unique and inviting atmosphere.'

Built during the 1920s, the hotel has a Mediterranean feel with early American influences. Charles and Elizabeth Helt purchased the hotel in 1928 and ran a 13-room seasonal resort for winter visitors. Renovations and additions in the 1930s and 1980s added approximately 60 rooms, each slightly different from the next, and expanded the lobby to include a fire place, antiques, glass bricks, and French doors that open onto the front porch. The design of the Hotel Indigo will build on these quaint features to create a lodging experience that guests won't find anywhere else in the Tampa Bay area.

Boutique hotels, known for their intimate, luxurious environments in addition to personalized accommodations and services, have gained increasing popularity throughout North America. Hotel Indigo is known as the industry's first branded boutique hotel, artfully combining the conveniences and consistencies of a brand hotel with the design cache and service personality of a boutique at an attractive price. The soul of the brand's retail-inspired concept is renewal - thoughtful changes that are made throughout the year to keep the hotel fresh, similar to the way retailers change their window displays. The renewal concept provides even the most frequent guest a unique experience with every stay. The hotel will feature renewable elements such as vivid nature-inspired murals, area rugs, plush duvets and slip covers that will change periodically. Public spaces will be transformed seasonally through changing artwork, music, flora and murals.

The Hotel Indigo will feature signature design elements including oversized lobby chairs, which create a personal work or dining space within the public areas of the hotel, cozy, airy and inviting guestrooms with plush bedding, hardwood-style flooring and spa-inspired showers, and a Phitness studio with cardio equipment and free weights. The hotel will also offer Phi, an on-site casual gourmet restaurant, a 24-hour business center, a courtyard with outdoor swimming pool, and wireless high-speed Internet access throughout the hotel. The hotel also offers a generous 3,200 square feet of meeting space, and has long been a popular destination for weddings, dances, business meetings and small conferences.

The hotel is owned and will be managed by BayStar Hotel Group under a license agreement with a company in the InterContinental Hotels Group.

The Hotel Indigo brand is quickly expanding throughout North America, with 15 locations open and more than 60 under development, either in the pipeline or in final negotiation. The first Hotel Indigo opened in Atlanta in October 2004, followed by Hotel Indigo Chicago Gold Coast, Chicago Schaumburg North, Houston at the Galleria, Hotel Indigo Dallas, Ottawa Downtown City Centre, Canada, Hotel Indigo Scottsdale, Ariz., Hotel Indigo Sarasota, Fla, Hotel Indigo Buffalo-Amherst, N.Y., Hotel Indigo Nashville West End, Hotel Indigo Mérida Hacienda Misné, Mexico, Hotel Indigo Boston-Newton Riverside, Hotel Indigo Columbus Downtown, Ind., Hotel Indigo Fishers-Indy's Uptown, and Hotel Indigo Chicago-Vernon Hills. Future sites of Hotel Indigo hotels include Miami, Fl., St. Louis, Mo., London, England, San Antonio, Texas, Baltimore, Md., Las Vegas, Nev., and New York, N.Y.

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