

APPOINTMENTS

The latest big moves in the Asia Pacific travel industry

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Travel Daily chats to Anthony Ross of the Preferred Hotel Group

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Preferred ready for Chinese expansion

Anthony Ross chats to Travel Daily about expansion plans...

Preferred Hotel Group is focusing on China as it expands its portfolio and customer base in Asia Pacific.

Speaking to *Travel Daily*, Anthony Ross, Preferred Hotel Group's executive vice president for Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa, revealed that company is now representing a growing number of hotels in China, including the recent signing of a major multi-property deal.

"China is obviously a big focus for us. We have a good portfolio now in China; we'll be up to 23 hotels by the end of the year," said Ross. "We've signed a deal with BTG-Jianguo Hotels & Resorts - one of the largest hotel companies in China. They've got a great portfolio all over the country and they've given us two of their hotels as a start - one in Guangzhou and one in Beijing - and we're also talking to another one in Beijing."

"They've got about 80 hotels. I wouldn't say [we'll represent] the entire portfolio... but we'd like to think we can make inroads with them."

And the portfolio growth is taking in all parts of the country, from the southwest to the northeast.

"We've just signed up the new Swire Hotel in Chengdu, Temple House," Ross confirmed. "[And] we're expanding now into the northeast of China, with the Furama Hotel Dalian. It's a standalone hotel and probably the best independent hotel in the northeast of China. That will be a springboard for us to move into Changchun, Shenyang and Harbin."



Anthony Ross

And Preferred Hotel Group's Chinese growth plan is two-fold, with the company aiming to tap into the huge Chinese outbound tourism market. Last year, the company launched its 'China Ready Programme' strategy, which includes a series of service initiatives aimed at Chinese travellers.

"China is very important," said Ross. "One hundred million

outbound [travellers] this year; soon to be 200 million... So we need to understand how we can leverage opportunities domestically in China, as well as outbound."

And as the Chinese hotel industry continues its rapid expansion, demand for Preferred Hotel Group's services - both from hotels owners and guests - should rise in tandem. ***Click here for full story →***

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China Airlines codeshares across Canada

China Airlines (CAL) has entered into a new agreement that will allow its passengers to access more destinations in Canada. The Taiwanese carrier will now codeshare with WestJet, enabling passengers to connect from CAL's Taipei-Vancouver flights to a series of domestic destinations. Connections will also be available from Los Angeles.

Wedding party missing in Bali waters

A search is underway in the seas off Bali after a motorboat carrying a wedding party went missing. The *Jakarta Post* reports that the boat was carrying 49 passengers from Madura, off the northeast coast of Java, to Bali,

when it went missing. Local police were reported saying that the boat was carrying a wedding party of 17 men, 21 women and 11 children. A search and rescue team has been deployed to try to find the passengers.

Emirates to fly A380 to Milan

Emirates will deploy its Airbus A380 aircraft on the Dubai-Milan route later this year. Commencing on 1 December 2014, the airline will use the double-decker jet on one of its three daily flights to Milan Malpensa Airport. The aircraft will replace a Boeing 777-300, boosting the total capacity of the route by almost 38%.

"With Milan Expo 2015 closely approaching, over 20 million visitors are expected to visit the city and more than three million visitors will travel to Milan from international destinations, and we are well placed to cater to the upward demand within that period and beyond," said Thierry Antinori, Emirates' executive vice president & chief commercial officer.



Emirates will use a three-class A380 on the Milan route, offering 14 seats in first class, 76 in business class and 399 in economy. The service will operate daily as flight EK91, departing Dubai at 1540 and arriving at Milan Malpensa airport at 1935. The return flight, EK92, will then depart Milan at 2120, arriving back into Dubai at 0625 the next day. ***Click here for full story →***

Radisson Blu celebrates four years in Asia

Radisson Blu properties across Asia Pacific have celebrated 'Blu Day', to mark the brand's fourth birthday in the region. Carlson Rezidor's upper upscale brand has now checked-in more than 10 million guests since planting its flag in the region in 2010. It is now represented by 42 operating hotels in across Asia Pacific, with another 35 under development.

"Over the past four years, 10 million guests have enjoyed Radisson Blu's hospitality in

Asia Pacific," said Sandy Russell, Carlson Rezidor's vice president of commercial operations for Asia Pacific. "It is heart-warming to see our hotels enthusiastically celebrating Blu Day with our guests, thanking them for choosing Radisson Blu."

Blu Day celebrations this year included a special blue-themed party for guests at the Radisson Blu New World Shanghai and a blue flash mob at the Radisson Blu New Delhi. ***Click here for full story →***

