

HOTEL PROFILE | BEIJING

China welcomes MGM with open arms

MGM Resorts International plans to make a big impression on the mainland by partnering with Diaoyutai State Guesthouse. **Liu Weifeng** reports

Las Vegas entertainment and hospitality giant MGM Resorts International will finally make its presence felt on the Chinese mainland.

Beijing, Sanya, Tianjin, Chengdu and Shanghai are all scheduled to open MGM hotels from 2011 to 2014. The Diaoyutai Art Hotel, near Yonghegong Lama Temple in Beijing, will be the first to open, in August 2011.

James J. Murren, chairman and chief executive officer of the company, says the brand has broader business interests than just its famed Las Vegas and Macao casino and gaming businesses.

The change of name from MGM Mirage to MGM Resorts International, since June, reflects the company's new strategy of emphasizing its non-gaming business globally.

Diaoyutai MGM Hospitality, a joint venture between Diaoyutai State Guesthouse and MGM Resorts International, will be responsible for hospitality development on the mainland.

"We're very proud of and appreciate our partnership with Diaoyutai, whose reputation is known around the world. Its service, quality and brand is synonymous with excellence," Murren says.

He believes the partnership is "incredibly valuable" and has special insight into local customers' tastes.

Having had a taste himself for top-class art since he was young, Murren expects his first hotel in Beijing to be a work of art and a landmark, hence the name: Diaoyutai Art Hotel.

"It's small, like a boutique hotel, but very unique, very high-end, only targeting affluent people with



James J. Murren, chairman and chief executive officer of MGM Resorts International

a holistic view of life ... of physical fitness, of cultural awareness, of art and of humanity," he says.

The property has just 103 rooms but will have a large spa with natural spring water.

The small but impressive start signals big things to come.

By the end of 2011, the joint venture will be dealing with over 20 projects. Five years from now, 50 projects will be underway in China, including meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE), entertainment, office, residential and retailing projects, in at least 20 cities.

Murren predicts MGM's MICE business will be

up 10 percent this year over last, and 20 percent in 2011 over 2010.

In Macao, MGM's joint venture with Pansy Ho, daughter of casino mogul Stanley Ho, has been developing smoothly. It filed an A-1 Hong Kong Stock Exchange listing about one-and-a-half months ago for its initial public offering.

"We're going to list 20-25 percent of the total enterprise (\$1.2 billion). I can't predict very specific in terms of timing but I can say we're ready," Murren says.

He says the company's property business in Macao is becoming increasingly profitable.

"So the timing is very fortunate for us," he says.

In May, he met with Vice-Premier Wang Qishan and they talked for one-and-a-half hours about a wide range of topics, from bilateral politics and currency, to tourism and its development in China.

MGM Resorts International has 60,000 employees worldwide.

When talking about its human resources strategy, Murren says he is good at recognizing people's talents and motivating them.

"The great motivating factor is when you are in the middle of the project ... you are in a crisis situation and overcome the pain and stress," he says, recalling how tough it was to build Las Vegas' mega-complex, CityCenter, during the recession.

To make it clear to investors and guests, MGM Resorts International emphasizes it is not affiliated to MGM Studios, which is a separate entity with no common ownership. The latter has been under focus as it filed for bankruptcy on Nov 3.

HOTEL PROFILE | GUANGZHOU

Ritz Carlton, Guangzhou, ready for Asian Games visitors

The Ritz-Carlton, Guangzhou, expects a "very healthy growth" of tourists in the capital of Guangdong province, thanks to the ongoing Asian Games, says general manager Michelle Caporicci.

"It brings worldwide exposure to the city," she says, adding the Pearl River New Town, where the hotel is situated, will take center stage as the new business and cultural district.

The hotel provides striking views of the Guangzhou TV Tower which looks over Haixinsha Island, where the flame for the Asian Games will remain lit for two weeks.

In preparation for the games, a special committee consisting of all major department heads of the hotel was established back in 2009.

The hotel has been working with the Asian Games organizing committee and other government agencies to make sure it is 100 percent ready for the Games, Caporicci says.

Speaking of the local hotel scene, Caporicci says the Guangzhou market has endless potential.

"It is a growing market. Customers love to learn more about luxury and have a stronger appetite for luxury. They are willing to try different new things. For luxury hotels, it's really exciting."

Caporicci says the features that make the hotel stand out in the local market include a beautiful private club by the Pearl River, an expensive honor bar at the Ritz-Carlton suite, its culinary excellence



Michelle Caporicci, general manager of The Ritz-Carlton, Guangzhou

in this food capital of China, and its 24-hour fitness center.

"The Ritz-Carlton Club presents the luxury hotel experience, combining intimacy, comfort and exclusivity with personalized service and attention to detail."

Located on the 33rd floor of the hotel, the club lounge offers 270 degree breathtaking views of

the Pearl River, the fast-growing new CBD, and city landmarks like Guangdong Museum and the magnificent Guangzhou TV Tower right across the river.

Located on the 38th floor of the hotel, the 400 square meter Ritz-Carlton suite is claimed to be "the most luxurious presidential suite by the Pearl River".

Meanwhile, the Ritz-Carlton, Guangzhou, like its nearly 70 sister hotels in 24 countries worldwide, is dedicated to serving its community as well, Caporicci says. A company-wide program named Community Footprints focuses on contributing to the social and cultural growth of each hotel's host city.

Since The Ritz-Carlton, Guangzhou's opening 18 months ago, it has continued this tradition through a series of events, from the *My Sky My Home Charity Exhibition*, which solicited and sold fine-art paintings for charity, to "Succeed Through Service", which will offer students an opportunity to explore career options in the hospitality industry, in addition to providing mentoring programs and service-learning projects.

The hotel also held the "Service Excellence Seminar" for the Guangzhou Taxi Industry that brought together more than 1,000 drivers to share the Ritz-Carlton service spirit.

"Recently, we distributed tailor-made English booklets for these drivers to help them shine in front of visitors from all over Asia," Caporicci says.

who's who



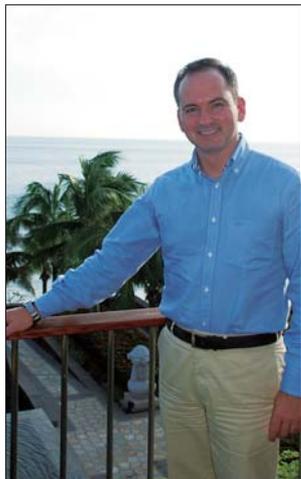
Langham Place, Beijing Capital International Airport, a five-star hotel near Terminal 3, celebrates its grand opening on Oct 28.



K.S. Lo (right), chairman of Langham Hotels International, poses with pianist Lang Lang, who has been named as the first global ambassador for the group's two hotel brands - Langham and Langham Place.



Fredy Pascal (second from left), director of food and beverage of the 714-room Hilton Shanghai, and Emmanuel Souliere (right), the hotel's executive chef, pose with the former owner of Chateau Cos d'Estournel (left) and wine connoisseur Bruno Prats (second from right) at a wine tasting party at the Hilton Shanghai Veranda.



The Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group has announced the appointment of Paul Jackson as general manager of Mandarin Oriental, Sanya.



Manfred Weber (left), general manager of the Portman Ritz-Carlton Shanghai, poses with Roger Federer, the tennis champion.



Gottfried Bogensperger (left), general manager of Hyatt on the Bund, welcomes Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, president of Iceland, upon his arrival at the hotel.



The Miss World Sportsman 2010 Event was held at the Sheraton Sanya Resort. Pictured is the award ceremony.



Miss World 2010, Alexandria Mills from the United States (middle), receives her prize from Otto Kurzendorfer (right), general manager of the Crowne Plaza Sanya, at a press conference held at the hotel.

hotellistings

BEIJING Malaysian chef

Scene a Café, the all-day restaurant at China World Hotel, Beijing, is holding a Malaysian food promotion until Nov 21. New chef de cuisine Justin Kam is responsible for the food and overall operations in the restaurant's kitchen. He's Malaysian and has more than 20 years of culinary experience in the hospitality sector. 010-6505-2266 Ext 35

Afternoon tea

Perched high above the city on the 80th floor of China World Tower, The Lounge at China World Summit Wing Beijing, provides an elegant setting for a relaxing afternoon tea or to conduct informal business meetings over gourmet refreshments, with breathtaking views of Beijing's cityscape. Guests at The Lounge may indulge in chic "comfort cuisine", one of the largest selections of premier teas in the city, specialty coffees and refreshing cocktails, available throughout the day. 3-6 pm. 010-6505-2299 Ext 6431

Christmas goodies

Kempi Deli at Kempinski Hotel Lufthansa Center bakes a "winter wonderland" of sweets to make your Christmas season special. Choose the perfect gift for loved ones from the selection of traditional European cakes, pastries and cookies. From Nov 26, young and old alike will delight at the life-sized Gingerbread House in the lobby. An Adventsmarkt sells traditional German Christollen, chocolate truffle Yule logs, English fruitcake and Grandma's home-baked cookies. Available at hotel lobby and Kempie Deli. 010-6465-3388 Ext 4200



The white diamond

Chef Yannick Ehsam of Le Pré Lenotre has prepared a special menu for November at the French Gastronomic Restaurant at Sofitel Wanda Beijing. The set meal is dedicated to the white truffle and comprises ravioli, fish, seafood, ice cream, and pancakes. The four-course meal costs 1,588 yuan per person. 010-8599-6666 Ext 6528

Year-end package

The Regent Beijing offers a year-end party special package, featuring two options, one at 488 yuan per person, another at 588 yuan per person, subject to 15 percent surcharge. The prices include Chinese or international set buffet, two hours of free flow soft drinks and local beer, use of function room, and lucky draw prizes. 010-8522-1888 Ext 5633

Classic cuisine

Aria chef de cuisine Matthew McCool's "classic and innovative European" cuisine has lobster ravioli with white truffle, duck breast with milk skin and white truffle, as well as chicken liver parfait with truffle. 010-6505-2266 Ext 36

SHANGHAI Pere Noel

Pere Noel, or Father Christmas as he is called in France, is joining the Allure restaurant at Le Royal Meridien Shanghai to bring an authentic Parisian Christmas Eve celebration this year. He is busy drawing up a list of superb raffle prizes for the evening's lucky winners. The guests can enjoy a six-course set menu with wine for 1,088 yuan per person on Dec 24. 021-3318-9999 Ext 7022

Winter specialties

Feel the warmth at the Grand Hyatt Shanghai during the winter, with a variety of nourishing seasonal delicacies. Come and enjoy the finest ingredients including duck, goose and venison, traditional Chinese winter specialties, along with dark pork, halibut and Alaskan king crab. 021-5047-1234 Ext 8778/9



Winter wonderland

The Ritz-Carlton Shanghai Pudong is offering Italian flavor truffles during the month of November. For lunch, a three-course truffle menu is available for 598 yuan per person and the four-course dinner is 698 yuan per person. For dinner, enjoy the truffle menu at 798 yuan per person for three courses, 988 yuan for four courses and 1,288 yuan for five courses. All prices are subject to a 15 percent surcharge. 021-2020-1888

Year-end party

Grand Hyatt Shanghai offers year-end party packages from Dec 1 to Feb 28, 2011. The package is priced from 450 yuan per person and includes a selection of Chinese and Western set menus and buffet menus, three hours of free-flowing soft drinks and beer and complimentary use of audiovisual equipment. 021-5049-1234

Christmas Eve buffet

Hyatt on the Bund will treat guests with a Christmas Eve buffet dinner, together with spectacular views of Shanghai from the restaurants. The Christmas Eve buffet is priced at 598 yuan per person with free flow of beer and soft drinks. Children can enjoy a special price of 299 yuan. 021-6393-1234 Ext 6398