

Luxury Briefing

No **108**

CELEBRATING

10
YEARS

OF REQUIRED READING FOR THE
LUXURY INDUSTRY



10 Quintessentially Estates

Concierge service provider Quintessentially has been adding activities to its portfolio with the launches of Quintessentially Events and Quintessentially Wines. The latest brand extension is Quintessentially Estates. The facility serves as a bespoke international property-finding service and is available to both members and non-members. When a suitable property has been sourced Quintessentially Estates will act in an advisory capacity, overseeing the

LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVE

The latest luxury floating residences have been launched in London, where the vessel containing them is currently docked. The **FOUR SEASONS OCEAN RESIDENCES** is a 48,600 ton, 719 ft vessel with 112 private apartments equipped with hotel-style staffing and services. Now available for sale, the residences have been created by Tillburg Design which also developed the Queen Mary II. Spaces range between 800 sq ft and over 7,000 sq ft, with bedrooms in single-storey to triplex spaces. On-board facilities include an 11,000 sq ft spa, four restaurants, two shopping malls named Fifth Avenue and Bond Street, a casino, gourmet market, wine cellar, putting greens, driving range, helipad and marina. The 13-deck ship will cruise between major European destinations and events, with its maiden voyage scheduled for 2010.

negotiation and conveyancing process with the assistance of its team of legal advisors. When the property has been purchased, builders, staff and post-sales care can be provided as part of the service, as well as three months free Quintessentially Concierge service for non-members. Aaron Simpson, co-Founder, told *Luxury Briefing*, "There is a definite market of time-poor property buyers who want a bespoke one-on-one service to source the ideal home. It made perfect commercial sense to offer a property-finding division and Quintessentially Estates is a natural extension of our business. No one else offers a service like this, where we can be utterly bespoke but also have direct contact with the best realtors and properties."

Exosphere

Exosphere is a new private members' travel club set up by John Saunders, the force behind the Altitude events company. Unusually for a travel company, there are no brochures, as each itinerary is entirely bespoke. Membership is free but available by invitation only. John Saunders told *Luxury Briefing*, "We set up Exosphere as it complemented what we were doing with Altitude. It's still about knowledge, planning and organisation at a very high level, but just approaching it from a different angle. We also pride ourselves on being available to help our members at all times, so if they want to talk to us early in the morning or during the evening, or if they'd like us to send a representative round to their home or office, we're very happy to do that." Exosphere does not advertise and carefully screens potential members: less than 100 people were invited to join initially. Saunders explained, "We wanted to start with a small number of clients and provide top-level service, but we intend to grow slowly as we become more established."

The Altitude events company was set up in August 2006 and has a large number of blue chip clients including HSBC, Schrodgers, Lever Fabergé, Candover and ITV Granada.

Hotel Bel-Air

The legendary Hotel Bel-Air in Los Angeles is to open a new spa in autumn 2008. As well as treatment rooms, fitness centre and studio, the spa will have residential suites, allowing guests to go directly from room to spa, or have treatments in the suites themselves. The 12,000 sq ft building retains the colonial Spanish style of architecture of the Hotel Bel-Air and has been designed by Leo A

A ROOF WITH A VIEW

Open-air spaces are desirable rarities of Manhattan hotel design. **IAN SCHRAGER'S** Gramercy Park Hotel has opened the The Private Roof Club and Garden. The 13th-floor has a retractable roof to create a hybrid of an indoor and outdoor space. The space is modelled on a drawing room, with pieces by Damien Hirst and Andy Warhol which will be rotated in the same way as in an art gallery. Ian Schrager explained, "I wanted to create a new kind of public space... a private lobby in the sky as a counterpoint to the public lobby on the ground floor, where guests and members can gather, entertain and enjoy the hotel in a more discreet setting. It is a further refinement and evolution of my 'lobby socialising' idea and is something no other hotel has."

Daly. The launch follows the completion of a \$20m refurbishment which was undertaken as part of the hotel's 60th anniversary in 2006. Each of its 91 rooms and suites have now been individually redesigned and the public areas, including the restaurant, have been reworked. New additions include customised suites reflecting the tastes of some of the hotel's long-stay celebrity guests. The redesign of the guest rooms has been overseen by SJVD Design.

The Langham/Langham Place

Originally constructed in 1865 as London's first purpose-built grand hotel, The Langham is currently undergoing a two-year, £50m programme of extensive refurbishment. The new era has been heralded by the dramatic Artesian Bar, designed by David Collins, which incorporates both oriental and Victorian elements. Collins is now working on redesigning the restaurant, which is due to

WEAVING HOME

Italian leathergoods specialist **BOTTEGA VENETA** is to decorate a suite at the **ST REGIS** Hotel in Rome, which will launch in autumn 2007. The suite includes a sitting room foyer, three bedrooms and three bathrooms. Bottega Veneta launched a furniture collection a year ago and pieces from the range will be used in the suite alongside antique and ethnic objects. The design of the suite will be overseen by Bottega Veneta Creative Director Tomas Maier.

ROOM AT THE TOP

As airlines battle to offer the best premium services, Indian company **JET AIRWAYS** has introduced a private cabin service for passengers travelling between Mumbai and London. The 26 sq ft cabin can be used as a bedroom or office and includes wardrobe space and a flat screen television. A return to the days of cruise liner travel, but this time in the skies.

reopen in autumn 2007. Later this year work will start on the guest rooms, which will be remodelled to one of four new designs which have been laid out. The hotel has also launched an Infinity Suite, said to be currently the largest two-bedroom suite in a five-star London hotel. The new look is being carried out under Langham Hotels International, owned by Hong Kong-based property and hotel company Great Eagle Holdings. Managing Director Duncan Palmer explained: "When the hotel was opened by the Prince of Wales in 1865, it was the most glamorous place in London. All the incredible plans that will be implemented over the next few years will ensure that the Langham retains and exceeds its reputation as one of the most popular five-star independent hotels in London. When they think of our hotel, we want our guests to think of luxury, glamour, fun – and incredibly good service." Langham Hotels International also has Langham properties in Boston, Hong Kong, Melbourne and Auckland, and will roll out a further Langham property in Beijing under the Langham Place brand.

Castello di Casole

Castello di Casole is a new resort and residence club on a 4,200-acre private estate close to Florence and Siena. The Castello is currently being restored as a boutique hotel and is due to launch in autumn 2008, and 20 stone-walled *casali* – farmhouse villas – are already available for fractional or whole ownership. Set in a 50-acre area, they range in size from 4,000 to 7,000 sq ft. Fractional ownership is

“ I don't want to buy houses anymore. I only want places connected to hotels with room service. In Europe it's so horrible with people who work in your house. They can steal from you and you cannot get rid of them. I sold all my houses, and all my homes are now connected to hotels. I just push the button. If there's a leak, it's their problem, not mine ”

Karl Lagerfeld, Creative Director, Chanel, quoted in WWD

divided by tenths and villas can be personalised to owners' tastes. When fully operational, the Castello will have 32 suites, a fine dining restaurant and a spa. The resort is surrounded by vineyards and olive groves and the estate produces its own private-label olive oil and wine. The Castello di Casole enterprise has been set up by Timbers Resorts which launched in 1998 and also oversees properties in Colorado, Mexico, Arizona and the US Virgin Islands. Castello di Casole is the first Timbers Resorts property in Europe. David Burden, Founder and President, explained, "It's one thing to live the authentic Tuscan lifestyle, it's another to indulge in it – which is precisely the opportunity we're offering."

Essenza

An anonymous oil and property entrepreneur has set up a new company to develop, design, sell and manage apartments at covetable addresses in New York, London and Miami. Essenza Style is currently marketing Ocean 3651, a Miami property on Ocean Drive close to The Setai and Soho Beach House, and has also bought numbers two to 10 Grosvenor Crescent in London as part of a £150m deal. Renovation is currently taking place on these heritage buildings, whose interiors will incorporate contemporary, high-tech features, and an association has been formed with Claridges to provide services. Essenza also offers buyers a privilege card which gives access to a global concierge service run by the company.

Per Aquum Yachts

Per Aquum Resorts has launched Per Aquum Yachts as a subsidiary of the main brand. The fractional yacht company is selling eight shares in each of its 185 ft yachts for US\$2m, in return offering five weeks of cruising time per annum. Initially the boats will be moored in the Maldives, but there are plans to extend to



other locations as the scheme grows. Per Aquum Resorts is currently working on new resorts in Dubai, Sri Lanka, Grenada, Marrakech and the Seychelles.

The Anassa

The famous Anassa Hotel in Cyprus has recently undergone an extensive refurbishment. The property now has a new spa offering Organic Pharmacy treatments – available for the first time outside the UK – and entirely new furnishings throughout the guest rooms and public areas.

ISLAND LIVING

Having been transformed from wasteland to island paradise over the years, and with its best known hotel The Cotton House enjoying a recent refurbishment, Mustique made the news again when 17 plots were released for sale. In the process, **THE MUSTIQUE COMPANY**, which controls island development, has ensured that tourism has benefited the local community. It has set up educational, medical and environmental schemes aimed at helping the locals and preserving the island's natural resources. Brian Alexander, Managing Director, told *Luxury Briefing*, "The difference with Mustique is that we're not handing out dividends to investors in other parts of the world. All the money we make is ploughed back into the island and the community, and benefits those who cherish the place."

CLARIFICATION

JUMEIRAH would like to make it clear through *Luxury Briefing* that it is not responsible for the construction of properties at Palm Jumeirah, merely one of many hotel operators that will be managing hotels on the site.