

# TRAVEL WEEKLY ASIA



*Making A Difference*

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HAWAI'I FIJI THAILAND GUAM MAURITIUS MALDIVES



DISCOVERY 

# Outrigger points the way forward under new Thai owners



An aerial view of the Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort.

It would be true to say that it's business as usual for Outrigger Resorts in Asia following the US\$310 million acquisition of six Outrigger properties by Singha Estate, the Thai property development and investment holding company.

Equally, it would be fair to say that it's still business UNUSUAL for a brand that likes to do things a little differently. They call it the 'Outrigger Way' — a set of values that outlines the company's care for guests, host and place. Ian Jarrett reports.

Under the guiding hand of its new owners, Singha Estate, six Outrigger properties — Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort and Outrigger Koh Samui Beach Resort in Thailand, Outrigger Fiji Beach Resort and Castaway Island in Fiji, Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort in Mauritius, and Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort — will continue to be managed by the Honolulu-based resort operator to ensure continuity of service and style.

"With Singha Estate's reputation as outstanding stewards of the properties and places in which it invests, Outrigger has full confidence that its premier resorts will continue in exceptional care," said Jeff Wagoner, president and CEO, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts.

Wagoner said the asset sale and strategic partnership provided new capital for further expansion while retaining "Outrigger's brand presence and management of

world-class properties".

Sean Dee, Outrigger Hotels and Resorts EVP and chief marketing officer added, "From a guest and travel agent point of view, the Outrigger presence and future in Asia is as strong as ever. Indeed, in the new set up, there is significant planned capital commitment to the region."

"This will allow Outrigger to focus on enhancing the quality of our software, such as sales and marketing, guest services, and guest cultural activities including our acclaimed Outrigger Signature Experience programme."

The Outrigger acquisition, which comes with 859 room keys, will raise Singha Estate's hospitality business portfolio to a total of 4,644 room keys by the end of 2018, with 10 properties catering to visitors in global tourist destinations and a collection of 29 properties across the United Kingdom.

Outrigger also has a renewed emphasis on community tourism with guests willing to become involved in a range of projects.

Andrew Gee, Outrigger Resorts, VP sales and marketing, Asia Pacific, says, "Outrigger is seeing an increasing amount of positive feedback from guests participating in our community initiatives. For example, Outrigger projects help schools in Phuket, Fiji, and Mauritius. In the Maldives, as part of Outrigger's global marine conservation programme, OZONE, guests and their children learn from our in-house full-time marine biologist and participate in coral conservation work. It's a very encouraging trend."

The honeymoon and wedding market remains key to Outrigger operations, especially Outrigger Koh Samui Beach Resort, which is, in effect, a couple's resort, with all-pool villas. Outrigger offers a range of nine honeymoon packages for its Pacific, Asian and Indian Ocean beachfront resorts.

Customised to each location, the "Honeymoon Getaway Package" features standard inclusions such as breakfast in bed, floral bouquets, chocolates and chilled sparkling wine. Each location also provides unique offerings to newlyweds such as a sunset cruise with cocktails

and canapés at Outrigger Konotta Maldives Resort or a dinner on the beach and a 30-minute couple's massage at Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort.

The MICE market, too, is increasingly important across the Outriggers in Asia, especially Phuket. Outrigger Laguna Phuket Beach Resort earned official Thailand MICE Venue Accreditation from the Thai government. This follows Outrigger Mauritius Beach Resort's unveiling of

Crystal, a unique function space in the south of the island.

Dee adds, "Outrigger Resorts' ethos of delivering world class hospitality with a local flavour — The Outrigger Way — is as important now as ever. Outrigger guest satisfaction ratings continue to score above our competitive set on nearly all measurements." ■



Cultural activities available at Outrigger Koh Samui Beach Resort.

For the properties in Asia and the Indian Ocean, Outrigger will continue to focus on Signature Experiences that reflect local culture wherever Outrigger operates. As part of the Signature Experiences programme, Outrigger in Asia now has cooking tuition for guests in Phuket, Samui and Mauritius.