

DUBAI

One of the World's Most Exciting Countries for New Hotel Developments

Over the last four years I have visited Dubai on nine occasions and feel it lives up to its title as one of the world's most exciting places for new hotel development.

Earlier this year the ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum launched the country's new strategic plan with an aim to grow the economy by 11 percent per year up to 2015 and double its workforce during this time. Already Dubai is the commercial hub of the world's top oil-exporting region and oil contributed only 3 percent of Dubai's GDP which currently exceeds \$40 billion. One of the key sectors is tourism and there is a huge pipeline of new hotel developments under construction with one of the most exciting being Palm Jumeirah.

The two Dubai islands, The Palm Jumeirah and The Palm Jebel Ali, have been built in the shape of date palm trees and consist of a trunk, a crown with 17 fronds and a surrounding crescent island – the back of which forms the breakwater. Collectively, the island will support more than 60 luxury hotels, 4,000 exclusive residential villas, 1,000 unique water homes and 5,000 shoreline apartments, marinas, water theme parks, restaurants, shopping malls, sports facilities, health spas, cinemas and various dive sites.

To give you some idea of the magnitude of new hotel developments in the region, it



By Ted Horner and Floor Bleeker

Photos courtesy of Jumeirah Group

is estimated that 750,000 new hotel rooms will be built in the Gulf (this incorporates 14 countries including Dubai) between now and the year 2020. This equates to over \$3 trillion U.S. in development costs.

Jumeirah

Over the last two years one of my consulting clients has been Jumeirah, the operators of the world's only seven-star hotel the Burj Al Arab in Dubai. This hotel opened in 1999 and is very iconic, putting Dubai on the map with its incredible design and untold luxury.

Jumeirah is the Dubai-based luxury international hospitality management company responsible for the management of some of the world's most innovative properties like the Burj Al Arab and the Jumeirah Beach Hotel in Dubai and the Jumeirah Essex House in New York. Jumeirah's brand philosophy is stay different. Jumeirah accentuates the individuality of its portfolio, and recognizes the distinctiveness of luxury travellers and the importance of personal experiences in their lives. With the introduction of the Stay Different™ philosophy Jumeirah wanted to reflect its customers' desires to be recognized as individuals. True luxury is emotional, memorable and above all personal. With the ambitious goal to have 57 luxury hotels around the world by 2011, Jumeirah

is currently working on a large number of new developments.

Jumeirah's Stay Different™ philosophy translates most clearly into their technology in two areas: CRM and in-room technology. Jumeirah developed a customer data integration hub that serves as the central profile depository for all guest-facing applications including PMS, Sirius (Jumeirah's rewards and recognition program) and restaurant reservations. The integration hub gathers preferences and behaviors and presents those back to the hotel operations to deliver true individualized service, and this goes down to a guest's preferred pillow off the Burj Al Arab pillow menu.

Inroom technology at Jumeirah is used to individualize the different hotels. Every hotel has its own individual technology concept, however the technology in each hotel is designed around a common set of principles and standards. It allows for personalization based on preferences captured in the CRM system. For example, in the new Jumeirah Business Bay hotel, a

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guest's favorite TV channels will show up first in the channel line up.

The in-room technology is guest-friendly and intuitive. Jumeirah makes frequent use of motion detectors to adjust lighting scenarios for example. Guests at Jumeirah will be pampered and the in-room technology is no exception to this.

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In new hotels the technology is designed in close cooperation with the interior designers of the hotel to create a seamlessly blended experience. Guests have easy access to their own technology. In the new World Trade Centre Residences, which will be managed by Jumeirah Living, the division within Jumeirah that manages luxury serviced apartments and residences, a guest can plug in his MP3 player in a central location and control it through the integrated entertainment system throughout the suite, even in the bathrooms.



Jumeirah wants to help its customers reduce their carbon footprint through sophisticated energy management systems that do not compromise the level of service to a guest. Guest technology is designed to generate value for the owners and operator. Guests in Jumeirah Essex House can soon redeem their Sirius loyalty points for high-definition movies or other content off the interactive TV system, generating a new revenue stream for the hotel. This is just a quick look at some of the innovation going on today in Dubai.

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