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Accor: 5,000 hotel rooms in Malaysia by 2012

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FRENCH hotel and services group Accor SA plans to operate 5,000 hotel rooms in Malaysia by 2012, including 12 under the three-star Ibis brand.

It is now in talks with 10 parties in Malaysia to expand its existing brands and introduce new mid-market brands like All Seasons.

In Malaysia, the hotel group operates the Sofitel Palm Suite in Johor and the Novotel Hydro Majestic Kuala Lumpur.

The stable of two hotels will expand with the opening of Pullman Putrajaya Lakeside, Novotel 1 Borneo Kota Kinabalu, Mercure Kota Kinabalu and Novotel Kuching.

"We are confident that the Malaysian market is strong and it is getting stronger and infrastructure is strong too. There is also a drive to develop tourism (in Malaysia)," Accor Asia Pacific vice-president for Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, Gerard Guillouet, told Business Times on the sidelines of the World of Accor Expo in Jakarta, Indonesia, recently.

The World of Accor brings together the hotel and travel agents, wholesalers, corporate travel bookers, meetings, conference and exhibition specialists and travel industry partner.

"We are looking to open a flagship Sofitel in Kuala Lumpur and one more Pullman in Kuala Lumpur, and we are also in talks to open Ibis,"

Guillouet said.

"We would like to have 12 Ibis hotels in Malaysia. This is our five-year plan," he said.

Accor also expressed keenness to have three of its brands — Pullman, Novotel and Sofitel — in Langkawi.

On how Accor expects to compete with other hotel operators who are also in talks possibly with the same parties and in the same location, Guillouet said he is confident that Accor has the upper-hand.

"We are the leader in Asia Pacific with the largest number of hotels.

"We are also the most diversified hotel operator in terms of number of brands," he said.

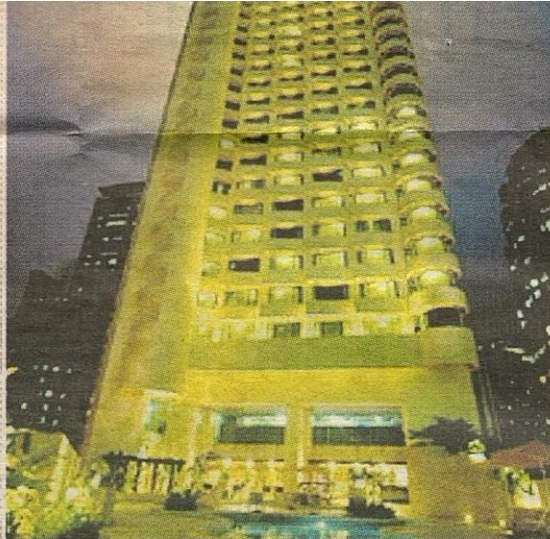
Accor's brand ranges from the budget Formule 1 to the five-star Sofitel brand.

Today, revenue contributions from its hotels in Asia Pacific stand at less than 10 per cent, which provides the hotel group ample opportunity for growth.



EXPANDING ITS BRAND: Staff at work at the Hotel Sofitel Paris Bercy in Paris. — Bloomberg picture

MALAYSIAN OPERATION: The Novotel Hydro Majestic in Kuala Lumpur



Operator eyes 20pc-70pc stake in hotels here

ACCOR SA is keen to take a 20 to 70 per cent stake in the hotel that it operates in Malaysia.

Accor, which is on an aggressive expansion mode in Asia Pacific including Malaysia, operates brands ranging from the budget Formule 1 to the five-star Sofitel.

“Like our strategy globally, Accor want to be an equity partner, especially in economy (class) hotels, as we want to control the product and be consistent (in our service offerings),” Accor Asia-Pacific vice president for Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, Gerard Guillouet, said.

“We are looking at anything between 20 per cent and 70 per cent stake. We have started discussions with several

hotel owners,” he said.

“We are happy to have investments in flagship hotels like Sofitel, Novotel or a Pullman,” he added.

Investments in four- and five-star hotels should not exceed 30 per cent, while in budget hotels will be up to 70 per cent.

Accor has sold many of its properties in Europe and is now investing some of those funds in new hotels in other parts of the world.

On the performance of its two existing hotels in Malaysia, namely the Sofitel Palm Suite in Johor and the Novotel Hydro Majestic Kuala Lumpur, Guillouet said revenue is expected to increase by 15 per cent this year against 2007.