

HOSPITALITY

Standard International readies for global hotel expansion

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Standard International is aiming to have 35 properties globally in five years as it prepares to open its first hotel in Thailand on Dec 1 in Hua Hin, developed by its largest shareholder Sansiri Plc.

The US market is coming back strong, mainly attributed to mass vaccination, a large domestic market and loose travel restrictions, said Amar Lalvani, chief executive of Standard International, the US-based parent company of The Standard Hotels, in which Sansiri owns a 62% stake.

He said hotels in London and the Maldives posted positive trends during the last three months, but were still below pre-pandemic levels because of some travel restrictions.

"Countries without quarantine or that have reduced quarantine substantially have had a much faster tourism revival," Mr Lalvani said.

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AMAR LALVANI

Chief executive, Standard International

some areas remained an obstacle, compared with quarantine-free destinations such as Mexico and Turkey, where leisure travel has been robust despite a high number of infections.

Mr Lalvani said the biggest change for the hotel business after the outbreak was travel patterns, as virtual technology had tended to replace single-day business trips.

People were still travelling, but less often and with longer trips. In addition, travellers were blending business and leisure on their trips.

However, meetings and conventions cannot be replaced and these activities will bounce back stronger after mass vaccinations, as seen in Las Vegas.

At present, The Standard Hotels has 17 properties with 1,834 rooms under three brands, including six properties under The Standard, which target gateway cities and resort destinations, and nine Bunkhouse hotels in secondary cities.

There are two hotels in Hua Hin and Khao Yai under The Peri Hotel brand, which are both owned by Sansiri.

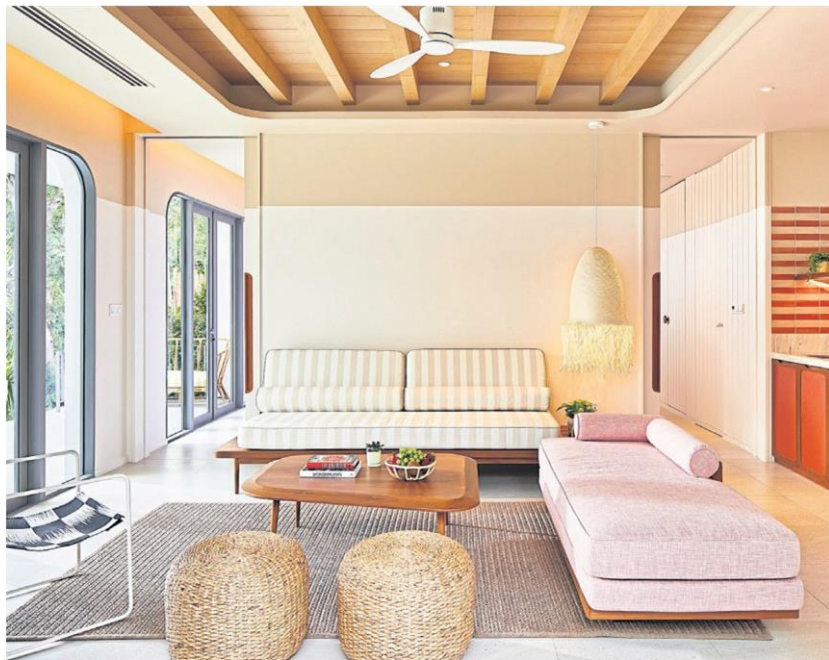
Mr Lalvani said 80% of hotel revenue currently derives from the US, but over the next decade revenue from other regions will grow to 80% as it plans to add another 18 properties in Asia, Australia and Europe in the next five years, in locations such as in Ibiza, Singapore, Melbourne, Lisbon, Dublin and Brussels.

He said the pandemic had deferred some planned projects, such as in Phuket and Koh Samui.

The firm is still committed to the plan to open The Standard in Hua Hin on Dec 1. The 178-room and 21-pool villa property is under the development and investment of Sansiri.

Meanwhile, the 155-room The Standard, Bangkok Mahanakhon, is set to open in 2022 with four outlets. The hotel is focusing on gaining 50% of its revenue from food and beverages, including entertainment and nightlife.

Mr Lalvani said even though rooms in its London hotel had low occupancy, it could be offset by its food unit.



The Standard, Hua Hin, developed by Sansiri, is scheduled to open on Dec 1, with 178 rooms, 21 pool villas, direct beach access and three eateries.